

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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NEVER FORGOTTEN.

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I. THE NEW PLAY.

A LITTLE white retiring monument in the Eastport churchyard, marked with a carved violet and a simple girl's name, was beginning to turn a little grey, after two years' exposure. Over at Eastport soft rain was dropping gently on it; but in Paris, at the same moment, a hot Paris day was fading out, and French Capua, where Youth is always at the prow, and Pleasure sleepless at the helm, was getting ready for the night. Little standing armies were drawn up in rank and file at every theatre door; and in the court-yard of the Grand Sybarite Hotel, at the foot of the stone staircase, was waiting a carriage of the establishment, to take away guests to the opera or theatre.

The Sybarites had feasted some four hundred strong, and were dropping away down the steps two and three together, in a pleasant rout. The Frenchmen, very warm and mellow, like true voluptuaries, were lighting cigars and picking teeth, or abstractedly feeling their purloined sugar lumps in their pockets. The hotel was lit up. Lights flashed from the Hundred and One Bureaux. Indistinctly the stars were seen through the great glass roof over the court. There was a glimpse of Paradise at the bright café to the left, where were wandering in the sated diners to lounge on velvet. Bright clean waiter youths lolled on the great stairs and chattered; for work was done. Carriages plunging and clattering in under the porch, were pulled up with violence, and, flinging out a visitor, clashed to their doors, and were gone again. There was lull in the life of the huge hotel; for it had been rather spent with the grand operation just passed through, and there was a reaction. The Capuans were languid.

The carriage of the establishment had been waiting more than half an hour, when a shining boy of a waiter called from the top of the steps to the coachman to be on the alert, for his company were coming down. Presently there did come down a tall Englishman in evening uniform, with an auburn-haired girl in a white cloak upon his arm—wreath, fan, and snowy gloves. He was clean, fresh, and transparent of skin, as only

Englishmen are. Two young gay waiters leaning on the balustrade smiled after them. A man in green and gold, bursting from some concealed hutch or warren, was holding the door open magnificently, then shut it to firmly as the couple entered, and the direction was given.

Boy-waiter the first looked at his neighbour inquiringly. Boy-waiter the second answered the look in speech.

"Capitaine Anglais."

"La petite? Tenez—ça va! Numero 60."

Deft handmaids had long since investigated minutely the crested ivory brushes in Numero 60, and studied Madame's dresses, and seen on a roomy portmanteau large white initials, "C. F.," and read with lame pronunciation a little card, "Captain Fermor."

Not alone the two English in the neat coupé, but all Paris, was converging to the one theatre. They were lighting up Aladdin's Wonderful Lamps all along the magic Boulevards. Crowds of the faithful sitting at tiny marble tables, sipping from the cloudy caraffes, saw through the trees the train of dark coaches trundling by with a flare to the one spot.

The English girl-wife, sitting in the carriage of the Sybarite establishment, burst out with all a child's raptures as she saw this gay panorama pass by. She broke out with little soft spasms of rapture. "How beautiful! How lovely! O, look! Do look!" while the English captain, calm as one who had seen all the known shows of the world, does look out—as a concession to this pleasant popular humour, and says that they do these things very well on the whole.

He was pleased that she was pleased: that is, he was calmly complacent. And, as they rolled along, he did the showman as if he were good naturedly talking in his own grounds. There will not be so enraptured an audience at any of the theatres open to-night as his companion. It was her first night in Paris.

They got to their theatre. "Some fellow has a new play to-night," said Captain Fermor, carelessly, as he helped her out and looked round with disgust at some one who jostled him. "They do make such a fuss about these things in this country."

The "fellow" who had written the play was a very famous young author, who, in his round of daily life, had played many characters, and shown

many profiles. He was brilliant, witty, sentimental, a petted darling of the salons, free and easy in manner, freer and easier in his life, penniless and political. In short, a true young French author. All these profiles, however, he might have shown save the last; which was the wrong one—and which he had exhibited to wrong persons. So that when the light-haired English captain and his wife—in custody of a dreadfully business-like woman in green, armed with little footstools—was let into a box or balcony, they found it crowded to the ceiling, but with two armies mixed together below, who at the proper season would draw off and join battle.

Captain Fermor settled himself, drew his hand up and down freely over his fresh clean shirt linen (perhaps the freshest and cleanest of all shirt linen in that assembly), fetched out his glass, and did the honours of the place. The girl beside him had a round quiet soft face, that would be called handsome, with a good smile. With fresh round cheeks, that twenty years hence will be fresher and rounder; she had a smile and a laugh ever hovering—hiding, perhaps—at the corner of her mouth: which, on faint encouragement, fluttered out and crossed to the other side, like some of the little figures in the Strasburg clock. She was very happy at that moment, in the gay and almost exciting scene, in herself, and in the noble—almost too superior—protector and patron who sat beside her reading his bill, who was so good natured as to teach her in reference to many of the little matters about her.

He took her through that document. "These fellows," he said, with comic pity, "will make a play out of anything. Just listen: 'L'AMOUR SE PAIE.' This is what we have come to see, L'Amour se Paie. There they are, all like children down there, crushing each other flat to get a doll or a bit of sugar-stick. I should like to throw it down to them—how they would struggle for it!"

The girl laughed at this pleasant way of putting the thing, and looked down at the amphitheatre of big children below. It was the most crowded playground they had seen for some time; but the game would presently turn out of a rough sort. A low hum and buzz rose from it, and nearly every one was standing up with the usual optical fire-arm levelled from his eye.

Next door, as it were, were a pair of typical Frenchmen, well dined and well filled. They had about begun to live; that meal was almost the first tangible act of this day. One was black and glossy-haired, with cheeks shaded over, through imperfect shaving, like parchment written upon; the other a gross swollen Frenchman, who under his waistcoat might have been corded round and round like brawn, and whose hair, black, short, and stubbly, dipped down in the centre of his forehead like the peak of a lady's waist. Both did a great deal of navy's work, with little pickaxes, about their teeth, and both contemplated the English girl with quiet

and critical study, as if she were part of the entertainment for which they had paid.

"English?" said the corded gentleman, half across his pickaxe. (He had come on a rocky and obstinate stratum.)

"Yes," said the other, also excavating; "a dish fresh and soft, too!" Both critics, calmly approbative, did not even care to drop their voices.

"Dear Charles," said the girl, delighted with everything about, "how charming all this is! It is fairy land! O what a place to live in! Ah," said she, suddenly, "do you recollect Roger de Garçon, that you used to lend me? Dear me," she added, in a sort of rapture of recollection, "how pleasant that was! Only this morning I was reading the old copy. But you forget."

"Ah, yes!" said he. "To be sure. You know I don't like plays. Why don't they begin in the orchestra?" Someway he did not dwell on the reminiscence with the same relish as she did.

"How long ago all that seems," said the girl; "like a dream. Your going to India—and coming back again. And that soft, sweet child Violet; who had such a charming name, and was so cold and treacherous—"

"A year and six months," said he, in his driest key, "is a year and six months, I believe. There were things at that place, and persons at that place, one meets every day. We have done with it now, and had better let it rest, and think of the present."

"But, somehow," she went on, "I felt such an interest in her, though I never saw her. I felt to her like a sister. And I assure you," she continued, in a little confusion, "only that papa had set his heart on your marrying me—I had often begged of him to go away and leave the place; it seemed so cruel to interfere with such a soft darling as I fancied her."

Fermor coloured. "You are candid," he said, a little bitterly. It was only the first two months of their marriage, or the infusion would have been stronger. "You tell the truth, certainly. I suppose there are to be no secrets between husband and wife."

She smiled, taking this for a welcome little burst of nuptial jealousy. (Olives come in very pleasantly with wine.)

"I like to talk of Eastport," she said, coquettishly. "For I was very happy there, though so ill. And yet it was so odd, so incomprehensible."

"What, pray?" said he, suddenly.

"I mean *her* turning out such a cold, designing creature—marrying that other man. I could not have fancied it. I was so sorry, though it was so fortunate for me."

A smile of complacency struggled in Fermor's face, while he said, "And for me too, I suppose I must say."

"And O! will you forgive me for telling you?" she went on, eagerly. "When I first heard of it, I thought the poor girl had been what they call thrown over, and I felt so much for her, that I said to papa—"

Fermor turned sharply round. "We have come to hear this play," he said, "and to amuse ourselves. By-and-by, we shall have time enough for these reminiscences; so please, now—" And he forced the rest of the sentence into a hard smile and a hard nod.

She was sufficiently trained to see how thin the ice was about this part. And she moved away cautiously from the subject.

The three strokes of a mallet on the stage made every flower rustle its leaves as if a breeze had fluttered round, and the curtain went up.

L'Amour se Paie was after the true pattern—of which regular "forms" seem kept in stock in France. It was very long and all conversational, and shifted from Madame Hauteville's drawing-room to her garden and back again. When it came to be printed by M. Dentu of the Palais Royal, the reader found his page planted scantily with a few lines of type, and each line boasted a few meagre shrubs of words. Still it was a marvel of neat wit—wit that is fined and delicately grained with emery-powder, and real ladies and gentlemen seemed to walk from Madame Hauteville's drawing-room to her garden and back again.

The way in which the truth, or aphorism, or even hypothesis of *L'Amour se Paie* was set before the audience, lay in working together a financier of tempered fun, a marquise, a Paris man of fashion, a simple artless school-girl, and a "noble" tutor, suffering from his situation. All during the first act these threads were plaited languidly: a warp of conversation was woven in volubly. The Exquisite showed his exquisiteness, the simple girl her simplicity, the financier his finance, and the "noble" tutor his nobleness—yet nothing had been done. As the act-drop came down there was applause from the grown children crowded below, applause met strangely by scornful laughs and a few hisses. But as yet there was nothing to applaud, nothing to condemn; the storming party were artfully waiting their time, until, say the end of the third act; when, waving their red flag, they would fly at the redoubt and sack the doomed piece.

Captain Fermor, looking down from his loge, which was high enough, and from a yet higher balcony of lofty English disdain, said, with a curling lip, "And they call this thing a play, do they? What is it all about? Why, it isn't a patch upon the Haymarket."

The fresh soft girl knew French—that is, the French of men and women—thoroughly. Fermor had some old building materials of that tongue, bought at school, lying about in his head.

"Oh, but, Charles," she said, "that poor young man, so chivalrous—"

"Do you mean that whining tutor?" he said, contemptuously. "The whole thing is a bore. It must fail. I wish," he added, putting up his hand politely to stop a yawn, "I wish we had gone to that other, what d'ye call it, spectacle."

The two Frenchmen still looked at the English lady steadily. The corded one—mellowed with

good Medoc and coffee, and a little cognac on the surface of the coffee, which, coming so near the top, gave his cheeks and eyes a warm inflamed tone—approved. He nodded approval to his neighbour. He was thinking how it would be compatible with his other little engagements to—he would make up his mind before the play was over.

CHAPTER II. A MEETING.

SECOND act. The mournful tutor was leaning his forehead on his hand and trying to read. For six francs a day he had to come and give a lesson to the simple girl whom he loved. She *has* loved her tutor, because, as she told her friend, Made-moiselle Laroux, "he was the first man I had ever seen, just as I was *éprise* of my first doll." In truth, she had a leaning to the exquisite, who was so pleasant with his Paris talk. Financier again, tutor, marquise, school-girl, all in a check pattern of talk; but no serious work.

At that moment there was a rustle and noise of moving chairs close beside the English lady and gentleman, with the sound of a box-door closing like the click of a trigger. Three seats had been vacant the whole night, guarded jealously. These were now at last to be filled. Then there came boldly down to the front, where she stayed a moment drawn up to her full height for the house to admire, a tall figure, lustrous and brilliant, flashing under the lights with every motion. A few beings of the parterre, not engaged in tumult, instantly turned their backs to the stage and levelled their glasses with effrontery. With her also came a dark square-built young man, with vellum cheeks and thoughtful meditative eyes, and a second gentleman. But they were in cold colours—dull sketches in greys and neutral tints, beside *her*. They sat down together. She continued to draw all eyes.

It was that bright radiant look which seemed to reflect back the radiance of fascination. Her rich black hair flashed back the light from a hundred ripples. It hung over her white forehead, and was gathered away to the right and left like the heavy folds of a curtain. Her face was oval, her eyebrows marked and arched, her eyes liquid and dark, and, though brilliant, were not sharp nor piercing, and, above all, her face seemed to be lit up from within by a strange piquant expression. But among the folds and draperies of her hair (and this the opera-glass musketeers in the parterre noted specially) was a rich scarlet geranium placed with excellent effect, and, carelessly dropping from her shoulders, was an Eastern black and gold opera-cloak. She might be a Jewess or a Spaniard.

The English girl was absorbed in the tutor and his woes. She had never seen anything so delightful. Fermor, with a curl of depreciation on his lip, seen under the black opera-glass, was slowly travelling round the house.

"I never saw such an exhibition," said he, not taking the glass from his eyes; "but we must stay, for I suspect there will be—"

He stopped suddenly, for the two muzzles of his glass were resting on the new faces just come in. The glass dropped on his knees. Then he gave a half start; half rose and sank again into his chair.

His eyes were fixed on the apparition of the bright lady and her two companions. A few "amateurs" in the parterre were looking too; but the whole house was absorbed in the play. The girl beside Fermor, with tearful earnest eyes, and the round chin resting on her hand, was wrapped up in the young tutor. She had never heard anything so interesting. There was such agony, such suffering in his face—that—

Suddenly she heard her husband whisper bluntly:

"We must go away. Come!"

She came back to practical life.

"Go away!" she said, in blank astonishment.

"Why? Oh, no, no! Just at this point, too!"

"I am sick of it," said he, rising. "I have a headache. I suppose you will not ask me to stay if I am ill?"

She rose in a second, and gathered up her cloak and "matériel." She looked back wistfully at the noble young tutor, whose face showed actual writhings of moral suffering; his sense of the degradation of his position was so very acute. As she turned to go, her cloak caught in a chair and overturned it. A flash of faces was turned to them, and a subdued "ts—s—" was heard.

"There! they will all see us!" said Fermor, with something like ferocity, "and I wanted to get out without noise."

He caught her arm roughly, and hurried her away.

She was frightened. "What is the matter, dear Charles?" she said again.

"Nothing," he said, shortly. "I did not say there was. Now please don't tease me, and let us get home in quiet."

He hurried her along the great passages. They got to the top of the flight of stairs.

"Take my arm!" he said.

There, too, at the same point, they were met by another party going away. It was the brilliant lady and her companions, who could not have heard a sentence of the new play, and were literally going away almost as soon as they had come.

Though in a little trouble, the girl was struck by the brightness of the Spanish-looking face and the flashing of her beauty, which she had now seen for the first time.

"O look, look, Charles!" she whispered, hurriedly; when, to her amazement, the lady came to meet them.

"Captain Fermor," said the stranger, and in her voice there was a sustained chanting sound almost melancholy, "what a meeting! How strange, how curious! And at a theatre of all places in the world!"

Fermor was not yet composed enough to answer steadily. He forced a kind of smile.

"Not forgotten me, surely?" said the lady.

"You remember when we last met, or when we were to have met?"

"Yes," said Fermor, faintly.

"And this," said she, "is Mrs. Fermor? I was sure of it, at a distance. I was one of your husband's old acquaintances. One of that crowd which he had to brush through, when life for him was literally a ball-room. One of the crowd whom he has paid visits to, and taken down to supper, and whose name he has forgotten by next morning."

Fermor was now collected enough to speak as Fermor was accustomed to speak.

"We are going home," he said; "a stupid play, that has given me a headache."

"How long do you remain in this place?" said the Spanish lady, abruptly, addressing Mrs. Fermor.

The latter, who had been looking at the strange lady quite fascinated, answered hastily,

"O—we are to stay a month, I believe."

Fermor struck in hurriedly: "No, no. We leave to-morrow; we are obliged to return. Got a letter to-day."

"Stay a month? Leave to-morrow?" said the Spanish lady, with a smile. "Then your plans are scarcely decided. You recollect my brother?" she added. "This is Mr. Romaine, his friend."

"I am afraid," said Fermor, "we must go away now. We have to—"

"Where are you staying?"

"At the Grand Hotel," said the English girl, who was addressed.

"O, then we shall see you there. Ours is Number 110. We have hardly chosen our rooms yet. But we shall see each other very often, and renew an old acquaintance. Indeed, we shall come and see you to-morrow," said the Spanish-looking lady, gaily. "Louis and I. You will be at home at twelve?"

"Yes, yes," said Fermor, hastily. "Delighted. To-morrow, at twelve."

"Good night, then," said the Spanish-looking lady. "I am so glad to have met you again. This is life, you see, all over, parting in a ball-room—meeting at a theatre. Now, Mr. Romaine, be bitter on that text."

Mr. Romaine—whose face had a handsome gauntness, and whose black eyes, and whose black moustache hanging like curls over his mouth, had an odd attraction for Mrs. Fermor—said something in a low voice to his friend.

"Ah, exactly," said the Spanish lady. "To-morrow, then, at twelve. Good night."

In the dark carriage, where Fermor's face could not be seen, the girl began to chatter and wonder.

"And you have forgotten her name?" she said, suddenly. "How wonderful! I should have remembered that splendid face till my dying day. I shall long to see her again."

"Yes," said he, catching at what she had suggested; "is it not odd? I shall recollect it later, I suppose."

"It is so strange," she said; "if I had seen a

man with such a face, I should never have forgotten his name."

Captain Fermor was moody and gloomy, and said impatiently, "I dare say—no doubt. Please don't ask me why this, and why that, and wonder at me for this and that. I have a headache, and the racket of this place is enough to give one a hundred headaches."

She was full of concern in a moment.

"How thoughtless and stupid I am," she said. "Why did you not tell me?"

At their hotel the green and gold official came rushing, and opened the door, as if it were a matter of life and death they should be extricated at once. The great stairs flashed out white and spacious. The sleepless Bureaux, where the lights blazed, were busy with their entries and erasures of arrivals and departures day and night long: of what were, in fact, the Births and Deaths to the Grand Hotel and its monster family.

At the top of the stairs Fermor stopped short suddenly. "What a place!" he said. "I am sick of their noise and flurry. One can't get a minute's quiet here. Look there! What did I say?"—as another carriage clattered in. "Shall we leave early in the morning, and go to the Mirabeau, or some Christian place?"

Deeply concerned for the pain which he must be suffering, she answered, eagerly, "Yes, Charles. Or what would you say—could we not go now?"

It was not nine o'clock.

"A very good idea," he said, with real pleasure. "You could put a few things together, and send for the boxes in the morning. You are a clever child, and a ready child too."

Greatly elated by this unusual commendation, she tripped away.

He went down to the Bureaux, where they were so busy with the Births and Deaths. This was to be a Death, for he was going to ask for his bill. As he came out suddenly, a lady and gentleman, who had descended from the carriage, stopped him.

"What! Home again?" she said, "and we just as soon as you."

Fermor began to gnaw at his moustache.

In a moment a waiter came to him with a strip of paper, and asked would monsieur have a carriage?

"Going away?" said the Spanish lady. "Only think, Louis! At this hour, too. Surely not. Recollect, you were to have seen us to-morrow."

Fermor crushed up the paper. "We have had to alter our arrangements," he said. "We are obliged to go. We have very little time. So—"

"No, no," said the Spanish lady, smiling, and shaking her head. "This is a little fourberie—some of the old old phantoms. Don't you recollect when we lived at Eastport, and when we were all so happy together? I dare say you have told her all about the time. No? Absurd. You can't go to-night. Where is Mrs. Fermor? I shall easily persuade her. Send up for her."

Fermor looked at the lady doubtfully and irresolutely, still crumpling the paper.

"No, no," she said, with encouragement. "To-morrow morning is more rational. More like a calm sensible Englishman. Above all, when we meet an old friend whom we have not seen for so long, and whom a mere chance has helped us to meet. Do oblige me in this. Let us sit down here awhile in Paradise, in the Arabian Nights! There are a hundred things I want to ask you—a hundred things you will want to hear from me. It will be old times returned over again."

There was something almost fascinating in her face and voice. Fermor, bewildered, confused, above all, surprised at the strange change in her—at the lightness and airiness of her manner (for she seemed a new Pauline)—made no resistance, but passed out with her into the bright colonnade where the thousand-and-one tables are clustered, and the clink of glass and china furnishes music.

Five minutes later came tripping down the young Mrs. Fermor. She was ready, and her little packing all done. But her husband was gone. A little confused from the sense of this desertion, she went in to the Bureau.

Numero 60. Yes. Monsieur had been furnished with the note. A little fit of curiosity came over her at that moment, and she thought she would refresh her husband's memory about the lady at the theatre—pleasantly surprising him with superior information. Who were in Numero 110?

A few pages turned over with complaisance, and the young lady registrar answered:

"Numero 110 et 111, Monsieur et Mdle. Manuel."

The young girl started. At the same moment an obliging young boy-waiter came to tell her that "Mr. Captain" was outside the café, sitting with a lady.

CHAPTER III. THE COLONNADE OF THE GRAND HOTEL.

UNDER that colonnade, and in the cool air, with carriage-lights twinkling past, and seen through the leaves of the trees, as though in a garden—with airy waiters flitting by with snowy napkins for wings, the English lady and gentleman sat at coffee. It was the best scenery in the world for confidence.

Every moment he was more and more amazed at the change in her.

She was a new Pauline, older, yet "finer," more dazzling, more splendid, more womanly; more decided, too, in manner—firmer, and more distinct in her voice. She was leaning over the little marble table, looking at him earnestly as she talked.

"Two years is a long time," she said, sadly. "I seem to have lived a quarter of a century. A thousand events have been crowded into that time. Spain, France, England, Spain again. We have been always travelling. It," she added,

in a low voice, "it was the only thing. Rest seemed like death."

Fermor dropped his eyes. "And Spain," he said, absently; "why Spain again?"

"Ah," she said, "our poor mother, you know. It was *her* country, and it was natural that she should like to see it before she died. Old people somehow think of these things. We had money, thank God. Her cousin left her everything. But she did not enjoy it long. Poor mamma."

"Good God!" said Fermor, in some distress. "Is she—? I did not hear—I did not, indeed. I have heard nothing. I was so far away, or I should have written."

Pauline laughed, a laugh faintly harsh, which was one of the changes he had noted in her.

"Written!" she said. "Why? There was no reason in the world for *that*. We wanted no consolation from any one. You saw very little of her. I can fancy, too, in India, with precious time taken up—every moment of it. I have often heard what strain is put there on men of capacity."

Fermor looked at her a little uneasily; but the large eyes seemed to be fixed on him with perfect honesty.

"Yes," he said, "they *did* work us there. But I am so sorry to hear this. And when—"

"O, long ago! A few months after you—had left. She was half a Spaniard, and very sensitive and delicate; and our poor Violet's death took hold of her mind a good deal, and, at last, unsettled it a little. You might have remarked how she doted on *her*—more, I believe, a great deal, than on me."

There was a silence for some moments. Then Fermor said, in a low voice:

"And Violet—poor Violet—I am glad you have mentioned it—I have often, I assure you, thought of it, and of that night, and what my conduct must have appeared. And I was so grieved when I heard it. But you know," he added, eagerly; "*what* could I do? I don't like speaking of it, it is so distressing a business, and has ended so unfortunately; but—"

"Why not?" said Pauline, hurriedly. "There is no need to take *that* view of it. After all, it is different with me, you know. Sisters will be sisters, and I," she added, more quickly, "had an affection for her that was almost extravagant. But *that* is my concern, you see. I must keep my own sufferings for myself. She was a child, too soft and tender for life. Had she been a girl," added Pauline, earnestly, "she would have lived."

Again she laughed, and Fermor saw a film gathering over her eyes. She brushed it away hastily. "Is it not absurd?" she said. "And two years ago!"

Fermor was all softened. The picture of poor Violet came back on him with a pang of self-reproach.

"I know," he said again, eagerly, "what you, what she must have thought. The business, I confess, *had* an odious look. But, if you had been behind the scenes, and seen what pressure—"

"Of course," said she. "A mere ordinary affair."

I suppose five thousand things of the same sort go on every year in England. Poor foolish girls take fancies, and men, not so foolish, are naturally flattered; and so it goes on for a time. Then it is discovered that the whole is impracticable and will never do. Intellect must have something more to lean on than mere love and worship. And so the whole vanishes in a pretty cloud of romance."

"Exactly," said Fermor.

"Your friends," said she, with eyes fixed on him, "naturally wished to see you advance in the world. You had brilliant prospects, abilities, good interest, and it was a pity to sacrifice them."

"Exactly," said Fermor again. "You quite understand it. It was a youthful attachment, but you know it would have ruined me. It was better for *both* in the end."

"Exactly," she said; "better for both. You say it was the only sensible course, after all. Of course you are right. Only a man of firmness and resolution could see it in *that* light. One of your weak youths would have plunged headforemost with her into ruin, and let the future take care of itself."

"I considered," said Fermor, growing quite assured, "that I was bound to look to *her* as well as to myself. Far more, indeed. I know human nature pretty well. I have, in fact, made it a practical study. I knew there would be some suffering at first; but that would be far better than ten times that suffering later."

Pauline's face was growing intensely earnest as she listened. When he looked up, the expression changed suddenly.

"I *knew*," said Fermor, "you would make all allowance. I was sure of it. The fact was, I saw it was—I may tell you now—I saw it was a mistake, about as soon as it was done. I knew it, and was quite grieved."

Her eyes were fixed on him with a greater and greater earnestness. But he did not see how her lips were compressed. "Yes?" she said, with an interrogative anxiety.

"We can't be always wise. As you say, the next best thing after a mistake is to see that it is a mistake. I saw it the very next day."

"You *did*?" she asked, with a sudden energy that would have startled another; then added, hastily: "To be sure. Sensible always. We are only women, after all."

"Poor child!" he went on. "Another would have been blunt, and spoken at once. I thought it better to trust to time and chance, those two great contrivers."

Again her eyes were fixed on him with a strange and almost deadly expression. "You *did*?" she said. "That was the plan, was it? I see. And it succeeded."

He looked up in a little surprise.

"Poor, poor Violet!" she suddenly broke out. "Poor, sweet, wretched darling! To be handed over to chance and time, those two great contrivers. What a life! Why could we not have saved her, poor lost darling? Time and chance,"

and she gave one of the strange laughs. "That was the secret, was it? But we should have had a stronger and less delicate subject to practise on. O, Violet! Violet!"

Her face dropped upon the little marble table, and Fermor heard her hysterical sobs as she stayed in this position for many minutes. He was greatly distressed, almost shocked at the violence of this grief, and tried to soothe her. In a few moments she raised her face and wiped her eyes. "This is very foolish," she said. "We women should train ourselves. But it does me good to think and talk of all this; it brings relief. It has quite comforted me meeting you. We must have many a talk on this matter in London and here. But you go to-morrow. Of course, you have your duties, and cannot waste time on a poor lonely sister like me."

She looked at him with a sort of shy fascination, and her voice was very musical and melancholy. "Twelve o'clock!" she said, rising suddenly; "how time has flown!"

"Good gracious!" he said, for the first time thinking of Mrs. Fermor. "So late! Yes, I shall see you again. We are not bound to a day. But I am so glad you have taken a calm, sensible view of this affair, as, indeed, I anticipated you would."

"Ah, yes! Let us go in, now," she said. They went into the great court. It was almost deserted. But the sleepless Bureaux were still at work. At the bottom of the great stair she said "Good night."

She followed him with her eyes as he ascended slowly: when he reached the top, he looked down and saw her figure standing in wonderful attitude of grace. He thought again of the curious changes that had taken place in her. "What a crisis," he said, as he looked down, "to pass through! How would a less skilful man have done?"

At that distance he could not see her face, nor the features in her face. But the eyes were flashing. And he could not hear the hard voice that came from the lips:

"It was, then, his own work; and he is satisfied! Before God, then, I shall not spare him!"

Once more, at the door of the lobby, he looked down, and saw her hand raised towards him. Complacently, he thought it was a sort of salutation, and he waved his own to her. Then went his way along the galleries. There was a smile on his face as he passed along; it was softened to a gentle feeling of romance very pleasurable. "My life," he thought, "has been a strange one. It might be written in a book. Who can tell what is coming, either?"

He found the young wife up, waiting. She had been writing—writing home to her father. He required one letter every day, without fail.

"I was having some coffee out on the Boulevards," said Fermor. "So sorry to have kept you; met a friend."

There was a curious look on the young wife's face, a colder one than he had ever seen.

"Tell me about it," she said, calmly. "An

old friend, or a new one? Had he anything to tell?"

Fermor walked to the window impatiently. "Nothing that you would care to hear," he said. "By the way, we need not be hurrying away in the morning. There is no necessity for such a precipitate departure. It would look absurd. We should be having the police after us!" He said this as though *she* had been proposing it.

"Just as you please," she said.

Her passiveness mystified him. But no more was said on the matter.

On the next day, about two o'clock, Captain Fermor fixed a flower in his button-hole, chose out a new pair of gloves, put some perfume on his handkerchief, and sent up to Numero 110, to know if Mademoiselle Manuel was at home. "I have not talked to a clever woman I don't know when," he said; "I must tell her the whole story about poor Violet from the very beginning." He had, in fact, prepared a dramatic little narrative, in which he himself was painted as an object of great interest.

The boy-waiter came with word that Mr. and Miss Manuel had left for London by the early train that morning.

ITALIAN IRON.

THERE are many points of view, besides the merely politico-religious, from which the Italian Convention, and the approaching union of the whole peninsula under one government, deserve to be regarded. Unless there comes some unlucky hitch in European politics, we shall see in Italy an immense development of manufactures and industry within the next few years.

We seldom reflect enough how much we in England owe, not only to our insular position which has kept us free from invasion, but to our freedom from close personal concern in continental wars. We have had far too much to do with them; we feel that, to our sorrow, every time the tax-gatherer comes round, and Mr. Gladstone feels it every time he performs one of his grand financial feats: but we have scarcely ever been interested in them at first hand. War with us has never been engrossing enough to hinder us from cultivating the arts of peace. The best soil in Europe (for, on the whole, we have the smallest proportion of utterly unimprovable land of any European country), the richest stores of mineral wealth, and time and opportunity to use them—these have been our advantages. Look, on the other hand, at the Continent during the half century ending with Waterloo—towns taken, trade paralysed or killed outright, countries ravaged, above all, men drawn off in far too large a percentage from peaceful occupations. We too had armies, but only large enough to win renown, and keep ourselves in practice, and support our position among the nations. We have always managed to do a good deal of our fighting by deputy. Subsidising Austrians or Russians, even though it does make the taxes heavier, is far less destruc-

tive to a nation than sweeping off the best of the population by wholesale conscriptions. A people does not soon recover such a terrible drain; it is just the case of a man who has had a wasting fever. They tell us that, in some parts of Germany, the people are still feeling the effects of the Thirty Years' War.

But things are changing rapidly. We no longer have it all our own way in the manufacturing world. Fifty years of something more like peace than the fifty which preceded them, are giving other nations a chance.

France moves less than some of the rest, because France keeps up such a vast army. But even France is now a very different rival in the walks of trade from the France of half a century ago. The excessive caution of French traders used to be proverbial; nearly all their largest transactions were merely retail compared with those of our houses. Now, everything in France is wholesale. "Retail business," says M. About, in his *Le Progrès*, "cannot keep its ground: even the little village shops must soon be branches of some company. The small dealer is doomed to disappear altogether."

As steam has lessened the difference between our own and other navies, so it has gone far to equalise the manufacturing power of nations. Italy with no coal, but with abundant metallic ores, can now get seaborne coal cheaply, and will surely turn her energies in more hopeful directions, when the enervating crotchets of pope and cardinals have gone the way of the miserable political system which so long paralysed the country.

The island of Elba is full of iron, not deposited in regular beds as it so generally is with us, but rather (as in Cornwall) thrown up by volcanic agency, the molten metal having turned the stratified rocks near it, into metamorphic. Like Cornwall, the greater part of the island is of granite or serpentine, mingled, however, with such a variety of crystalline forms as to make it a very paradise of mineralogists: aqua-marine, tourmaline, rock crystals of all kinds, aspar, agate, &c. Some of these are very rare. A silicate of aluminium and of lithium, which M. Simonin* calls "Castor," is found only here and in Sweden; and a silicate of aluminium and cæsium, which he calls "Pollux," is peculiar to the island; a small crystal of this, half as big as one's thumb, was sold to the Paris Mineralogical Museum for twelve pounds sterling. Ilvaïte is another mineral only found here. It is a silicate containing much iron. Lelièvre discovered it in 1800, and called it iénite, in honour of the victory of Jena. This put all the German savans in a furious rage; iénite they would not hear of; Liéfvrite they rechristened it, intending, thereby, to honour the discoverer. So that, as M. Simonin and others call it ilvaïte (from "Ilva," the Latin name of the island), the luckless mineral has at present three names.

* Writing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for 15th of September last.

Other "curiosities" are the beautiful arrangements of golden-yellow pyrites crystal, which the miners sell to visitors. There is also loadstone in several forms. The business of specimen hunting has long been well understood; indeed, more than one of the better cicerones have made important mineralogical discoveries. But the iron is the great thing, and it is found everywhere. The island is as full of it as the "Paris Mountain," in Anglesea, was of copper. A good deal of it occurs in the form of sand, like that on the beach at Taranaki, the richness of which helped to make the unhappy New Plymouth people so eager to keep their allotments. Now, how is the iron worked? Why, very inefficiently. Most of the mines are mere surface scratchings. In many places nothing else is needed. At Rio Marina, for instance, where you land from the Tuscan Piombino, the very mud is black and metallic, and the sea is, for a great distance, coloured dark red by the waters of the little stream which comes down from the "iron hills." The mode of bringing down the ore is primitive enough. You see a long string of donkeys carrying it in their panniers. Gangs of porters are then employed to haul it (still in baskets) on ship-board. The wheelbarrow is an unknown institution. Possibly the Elbans have the same prejudice against it which the Scotchman at Oporto found the Portuguese had; when he had imported a barrow at considerable cost, his gardener at once gave warning, indignantly asking, "Would you set a man to do the work of a beast?" Mechanical science is at a low ebb in Elba. There is not a crane in the whole island, nor a "slide" up which loaded waggons might, as they came down, pull up those which had been emptied at the bottom. When something of this kind, with tramway to match, was proposed to the Grand-Duke Leopold, "It's very clever; but what is to be done with all my donkeys?" he replied. Still, in spite of the grand-duke, the quantity of iron exported has greatly increased—from some fifteen thousand tons a year to an average of fifty-six thousand tons between 1851 and 1861. The year ending last June gave a total of one hundred thousand tons. At present no more can be exported with roads and means of shipment so imperfect as they are, and an open roadstead instead of a safe harbour. But the demand must go on increasing rapidly; and the supply is unlimited. M. Simonin compares it to the guano in the Chincha Isles, which, in the same way, is concentrated in a small space; but, in the guano isles, the wealth is only on the surface; in Elba the deposits of ore are so thick that they can supply a million tons a year for two thousand years without being exhausted. M. Simonin, who writes in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, an advanced and somewhat "Anglophile" publication, traces the great backwardness of the mining art in Elba and on the opposite mainland, chiefly to the fact that the state has worked its own mines. This concession to English views is very remarkable in one of a nation who are so fond of expecting government to do everything for

them. The Tuscan smelting furnaces work, it appears, only six months in the year; and those who know the expense of lighting a blast-furnace can readily calculate how destructive such a system must be to anything like profits.

Another evil is, that the mines were alienated to a Leghorn company, in 1851, for a term of years, of which seventeen have still to run. The Austrian bayonets had propped up the grand-ducal throne during the troubles of 'forty-eight, and their help was not given gratis. Who is to make the improvements during these seventeen years? Could not the Italian government borrow money and buy out the shareholders? Unfortunately, most of the shares have got into the hands of the grand-duke's family; and they (after their second exile) are hardly likely to help the King of Italy out of the dilemma. Meanwhile, it seems very sad that the new kingdom, which wants iron-plated ships, rifled cannon, and, above all, metals for her railways, should have to get these things from abroad. Only last year a contractor took twelve thousand tons of rails from French houses which use this very Elba iron. Italy must make these things for herself, and doubtless she will do so before long. An Italian company has been started to manufacture steel wholesale by our Bessemer process. Now, in a few years, steel will supersede iron completely. It will be used for boilers, for rails, for machinery. All iron will not make good steel; that of Elba is exceedingly suitable for the purpose. They say that the progress of the great European nations in iron-working represents their relative political importance. Without at all endorsing this statement, we may say that England, where some of the great blast-furnaces turn out as much as ninety tons a day, gives Italy an example herein which she will do well to follow. Rivalry of this kind would be truly useful to both nations: we are not so perfect but that we could learn; truth and chaste simplicity of design we seem never able fully to accomplish; here the Italian love of the beautiful might stand us in good stead.

But we must return for a few moments to Elba, and just look around us before sailing away. The island has other mineral riches besides its iron mines. Being made up chiefly of granite (of various epochs—granites are not, as we used to be taught, all of one date), it naturally furnishes that kaolin which comes from the decomposed granite rock, of which Cornwall sends so much to our pottery districts. Here is another branch of industry ready to the hands of the emancipated Italians. When we remember what they did in this way in the middle ages—how even fayence, common pottery, takes its name from Faenza—we feel sure the kaolin will not all be exported. Of course granite blocks are shipped from Elba, as they were in Roman times. The island also largely exports statuary and other marbles: its calcareous deposits, subjected to the action of the igneous rocks, have been very generally "altered" into marble. Thus, all things considered, Napoleon's little empire was not such a bad place after all.

There are of course many traditions about him in the island. He was always watching the roadstead, where there were, naturally enough, plenty of English cruisers. Yet he was not idle; he had not lost heart, as at St. Helena. He found work for his soldiers in making grand roads along and across the island; he opened fresh mines; cleared out and put in working order, old marble quarries; began to excavate on Monte-Giove, the site of Jupiter Ammon's temple. The very day that he sailed away he left special orders with his gardener about altering certain flower-beds. The people liked him. "He used to make twenty-franc pieces as common as half-crowns," said an old cicerone. Yet they did not cringe to him. "Who is this Napoleon that he puts us under tribute?" said the Senate of Capoliberi, when he wanted to exercise his imperial power of taxing his subjects. There was very nearly a drawn battle between the ex-Emperor and the men of the town, which boasted that it held charters dating from Roman times. Without exaggeration, Rio-Marina has parchments of the thirteenth century. The island has suffered cruelly from pirates, Saracens, and others, both before and since Barbarossa's time; and by way of compensation its rulers, whoever they might be, ruled lightly, and respected the old privileges of a set of men who had supplied Italy with iron for some two thousand five hundred years.

On the whole, Elba is a very interesting place to visit during a Mediterranean cruise. The scenery is by no means contemptible; indeed, the colouring of the bare granite and serpentine rocks is magnificent—perfectly Oriental in type. The botanist, too, will find much to interest him; the island belongs to the same botanical group with Corsica, Sardinia, and the Balearic Isles—a link between Italy and Spain. To those who have seen our own iron districts (and they are not all who go cruising in the Mediterranean), it will be interesting to compare our highly improved methods with the simple plan of operations adopted here, simple, but wasteful as well. At Calamita, for instance (which takes its name from the Italian word for magnetic iron ore—it was calamite by which the mariners of Amalfi guided their barks)—at Calamita the ore is shot down from the rock a height of over sixty yards on the beach, about half being lost by rolling away, pounding to dust, falling into the sea, &c. Strangely enough, the greater number of the workmen just now are political exiles, *manutengoli di Napoli*, the least desperate among the Calabrian brigands. They were starving here on the fourpence a day which government allows them, when it was proposed that they should be allowed to work in the mines. The American war was felt even in this corner of the world. Among the ships of all nations loading in the roads, there have been several Yankees whom dread of the Alabama kept from going into open sea, and who employed their forced leisure in carrying cargoes of iron to Marseilles.

Whether Elba will ever deserve again its old

name of *Æthalia*, which the Greeks gave it when it blazed over the nightly sea with Etruscan furnaces, is doubtful. The island was then, no doubt, thickly wooded. Now it is very bare of fuel. However, coal can be sent cheaply by sea, and in our own country we see, in the case of the Westbury iron-earth, that it pays to bring fuel to the ore if only the ore is rich enough. We have already taught the Elbans something. They used to neglect the old refuse-heaps lying in the Etruscan and Roman workings, till some English captains begged to be allowed to take them away as ballast. It was then found that, after a little washing to get rid of the accumulated clay, this rubble was very good ore. It now sells at nearly seven shillings the ton, the price of freshly-dug ore being not quite nine shillings.

We recommend every one who is exploring Tuscany, or sailing about in the Mediterranean, to pay a visit to Elba. It is at least as interesting as Malta, with its "joys of La Valette—Sirocco, sun, and sweat." It has a history too, as well as the Island of the Knights of St. John. Once nearly half its population was carried off by the pirate Barbarossa; many of them being rescued and restored, when, in 1535, Charles the Fifth took Algiers. The wretched weakness of these Italian coasts, left undefended during the rule of Apiani, Visconti, Buoncompagni, and the like, sufficiently explains the sullen indifference with which the peninsula submitted to Spanish domination.

But we do not mean to be political. To those who can, we say "Go and see Elba for yourselves." To those who cannot, we recommend M. Simonin's "monograph." It is lively and truthful.

A BLACK AFFAIR.

WELL, thank 'e, sir, I don't mind if I do. A little drop of rum, sir, if you please. Rum's my favourite liquor. I always think, sir, that there's more for your money, like, looking at it from all points. As regards quantity, it is not equal to gin, but, considering the colour and the flavour, it comes as near brandy as you could expect for fivepence a quartern. Here's fortune, sir.

How long have I been in the line? Close upon five-and-twenty years. You may know about the time when I tell you that Jim Crow was all the go; that's a pun, ain't it, sir? My mates tells me that I could write one of them Christmas burlesques stunning. You won't mind if I pun, sir, for I'm fond of fun, sir, and, between you and me, I like a bun, sir, as sure as a gun, sir. You see, it comes natural to me, like. Well, as I was a saying, it is about five-and-twenty years since I first took to the darkey business. I was a bit of a boy then, and did Jim Crow all over the country. I what you may call propagated him. When Dan Rice went into the country, he found I had been before him. All the boys and gals, sir, were

turning about and wheeling about and doin' just so, long before they saw Dan. I was the man, sir, that spoilt his plan, sir, for I was the boy that could can, sir. Well, sir, I won't pun, if you don't like it. But as I was a saying, sir, I made my first appearance in Jim Crow—little Jim Crow they called me—in a black face and a white pair of trousers. Lor' bless you, sir, what a thing is experience! At that time of day we used to black our faces with sut and tallow-grease, not knowing no better, but since then, sir, such is the march of intellect, sir, science has revealed burnt cork, which is simple and highly inoxshus. Whatever there may be a wanting, sir, to man here below, it's not cork. According to my experience of life, cork is everywhere, but I regret to say not bottles with something in them. But cork is all perwading, and with lucifers, which is also a universal element, there you are with Ethiopia in your waist-coat-pocket!

I began with the bones; rose rapidly, owing to my native genius, to the tambourine, advanced with giant strides to the banjo, and at last attained to the proud eminence of the concertina. I might have retired on a computence long before now, sir, if it hadn't been for the—; but why should I mention the word? What is it that conquers all mankind and makes cowards of us all, as Shakespeare observes? What is it? Why the fee-males. Hellen was the cause of Rob Roy's destruction, as the song says. The fee-males was the ruin of me; at least one feemale was. And that fee-male was my wife.

She was a fine woman, sir, and she is a fine woman, as ever you would desire to clap your eyes upon in a summer's day; a foot and a half taller than me, but no ambition, and such a rasping temper. For you, sir, or any gent as wasn't professional, she would have been just the thing. Tall, sir, high action, a fine figure-head, and a mole on her left cheek, but domestic. That's where we didn't hit it—she was domestic; and when a woman as is married to a professional is domestic, she can't a-bear you to be out of her sight. When you are away performing she gets jealous; not of anybody in particular, as far as I can make out, but of the public in general. A domestic wife, sir, in my walk of life, sir, tends to strife, sir—beg your pardon, I'm sure, sir; but it's a natural genius which there's no keeping down; always was witty, sir; can't help it.

My wife turned out downright unreasonable. She was for regular hours in the business. "Ten to five, or a little arter," she used to say, "is very good hours for a man to be in business, and a married man ought to be home and a-bed by ten o'clock." Well, you know, sir, in my line, that sort of thing won't do. Nigger serenading ain't like the Bank of England or Somerset 'Ouse. If Hop Light Loo is your line, you must do the best you can; and if you want a sweetheart, why darkey is your man. Leastwise, sir, I mean that in my line you can't choose your

hours, and you can't choose your district. On Lord Mayor's Day you may earn enough for a week in an hour or two, up a court about the Old Bailey, when the people are waiting to see the procession. But then every day of the year ain't the ninth of November. As a rule, there's nothing to be done in the nigger line until after dinner. Organs is the only thing in that way that people will stand directly after breakfast. You want a good foundation of roast beef or pork and something to drink, before you are in a humour for the niggers. And do you know, sir, I fancy that the more people have to drink, the better they like our performance. And so it is, sir, that our best time is at night about an hour before the public-houses close. As the Latin poet says, sir: *In vino veritas*. Well, I used to do a very good night business with our troupe, of which, being the concertina, I was the head and director, a very good business, sir, until I got married. But I hadn't been married a week, before Mrs. G. began to row me about being out late at night.

"My dear Maria," I says to her, "it's business; it's your living, my dear, and mine too."

"Don't tell me," she says; "there's no proper business to be done at this time of night, and if I had known the sort of life you was going to lead me, I shouldn't have married you."

"Well, Maria," I would say to her, "I'm sure I never deceived you as to my line of life."

"You told me you was a hartist," she says.

"I did," I says; "but did I ever deceive you as to the nature of the hart? Didn't I tell you in a honourable and straightforward manner that I was in the musical way, that my instrument was the concertina, and my spear of life the streets? It is true," I says, "that I came a-courting you in a clean face and my best Sunday-going suit; but when you remarked a black rim round my neck, didn't I make a clean breast of it, and confess to the burnt cork on my bended knees? And what did you say to me, Maria? Didn't you take me by the 'and, and say, 'Rise, Joseph, rise; it does not become you to kneel thus to a fragile woman? Love,' you says, 'is superior to a little sut, and I'd love you all the same if you was the Hottentot Venus.'"

Yes, sir, I was candid with Maria, and I was candid with her family, which had been in the ironmongery line and seen better days, but was now reduced through misfortunes. It is true that Maria's ma kept a mangle, presented to her by subscription by the members of her dutiful family, and that her pa, being unequal to exertion, was in the workhouse; but, having paid taxes and kept their own chay in better times, I knew what was due to them, and, on aspiring to Maria's 'and, stated all circumstances—birth, parentage, profession, and average earnings.

I remember well, sir, what the old gentleman said to me on the wedding-day. I went down to the workhouse for him at ten o'clock, and

brought him up in a cab to give his daughter away. And he gave her away, sir, cheerfully—which was very generous of him, considering that she was all his property. And, coming out of church, the old gentleman says to me.

"Joseph," says he, "things has been said, but not by me. Mind, it wasn't me as said Maria was going to marry beneath her. There's no pride about me; but the old woman, you know, was connected with the aristocracy, a house where a footman was kep, and, though brought down, Joseph, her notions are high. She didn't quite like it at first, and might have said something. But don't you take any notice she'll be reconciled to it in time."

So she was, sir; for the very next Sunday the old lady invited me and Maria to tea, and we took our own tea and sugar, and a new cottage loaf, and warmed the old lady up with a glass of six ale, and she was reconciled in no time. So you can't say there was any family misunderstanding, can you, sir? It was all fair and square; Maria knew what I was, and the family knew what I was, and they took me for what I was.

Maria could not deny it; yet often when I went home late she'd go into high strikes, fly at me like a cat and tear my clothes off my back, get hold of the tails of my coat—them long comic tails as we wear, sir—and off they'd come like tinder; then she'd make a grab at my hair, but that being a horsehair wig, deceived her, and only aggravated her the more, when she'd chuck the wig in the fire and seize me by the real hair, pulling out handfuls. There was no pacifying her, sir; soft words weren't a bit of use. I've took home something nice for supper, thinking that would prevent a row; but it didn't. Once, it was a bit of boiled pork and peas-puddin', and she took up the peas-puddin' in handfuls and threw it at me like mud. Peas-puddin' arn't a nice thing, sir, to be compo'd with. I've took her home a velvet bonnet all over roses and ribbons, and she's danced upon it, sir.

When I've been very late, and frightened to go home, I've got two or three of my mates to go in with me; sometimes I've took the whole troupe. But Lor' bless you, sir, it wouldn't have made no difference if I had gone home guarded by a regiment of soldiers, or a whole division of the police. Maria let us have it all round, generally with the banjo over the head. You see she had no sympathy with hart, sir, didn't understand it. Her idea of work was washing, and ironing, and cleaning up the house. "Fine thing for you," she would say, "gallivanting about, seeing pleasure, while I'm at home here, toiling and slaving." As a general rule, sir, I don't think women understand hart.

But the worst of it was that all this interfered with business. I'm a man that likes peace and quietness myself, and I'd do anything rather than have a row. I've sat many a night in the cold on the stairs, waiting for Maria's temper to cool down. But if you tread upon a worm, sir, it will turn, especially if you interfere with it in business, and humiliate it before the public at large. And that's what Maria did more than

once. She followed our troupe about to see what I was up to, and when I was going round with the hat, making my best bow and saying soft nonsense to the gals, she'd drop down upon me like a flash of lightning, and fetch me a crack on the side of the head that made me spin again. In private, a man as is fond of peace and quietness may take that sort of thing, but when it comes to a public performance, it ain't to be put up with. A professional man, sir, must stick up for himself before the public, though I am bound to say that always when Maria dropped down upon me in that way, the public laughed. I had it in my mind more than once to give Maria in charge, but I never could. She's a sort of woman, sir, that when you look at her it's all over with you—tall, sir, a fine figure-head, and such a stepper! But she ruined the night business, and all through her I had to lose the country business in the summer. There's a good bit of money to be picked up in the season at the watering-places, such as Margate and Ramsgate. But I never could go; Maria wouldn't let me.

"If you go, Joseph," she used to say, "I go."

Well, of course I couldn't drag Maria about with me over the country; it would have been double expense, and hartists in our line don't always find it easy to get lodgings. Ours, sir, is an awkward pocket to suit as regards rent. And being professionals, we like to keep ourselves quiet when we retire into private life. It wouldn't do for public characters like us to go to the Royal Hotel.

Well, the consequence was that my mates went without me, and I was left in London at the dull season of the year to do the best I could single-handed. But one nigger ain't no use, sir; it's true the concertina is scientific, but without the banjo and the bones it's nothing. I did very bad, and could get little more than a crust. But Maria didn't care. Her maximum always was, better a crust of bread-and-cheese and be home and a-bed at ten o'clock, than boiled rabbit and sprouts with gallivanting.

It was all jealousy. Yet I never give her any occasion, sir. Never. Of course I palavered the gals, and I dare say sometimes gammoned them out of their missus's beer-money; but it was in the way of business. It wasn't love, sir, it was ha'pence.

What I am going to tell you now, sir, is a great event, and I dare say some day it will be mentioned in History.

I had been playing about at the West-end all day, and had taken only about a couple of shillings. It was well on in the dull season; the nobs were still out of town, and the servant girls had spent all their board wages. I had been playing and singing for nearly an hour without getting e'er a copper. "It's no use," says I to myself; "I'll shut up and go home." So I popped the concertina into its case and started off, thinking, as I generally do when I'm in bad luck, that I might possibly find a purse or a bundle of notes lying in the road. Well, sir, just as I was turning out of Belgrave-

square I saw something white lying on the pavement. My heart was in my mouth. I thought it was the bundle of notes at last. But it wasn't. It was only a lady's cambric handkercher. But that was worth something, for it had lace all round it, and a coronet embroidered in the corner. I am no judge of lace myself, but I thought by the coronet that it was likely to be the real thing. So I put the handkercher in my pocket, and said nothing to nobody. I intended to give it to Maria when I got home; but she had a little bit of supper ready, and was so pleasant and agreeable, that I quite forgot all about it. I went to bed without mentioning the handkercher.

As I was dozing off, Maria, who had stopped up to put things to rights, suddenly came up to the bedside and shook me. "Joseph," she said.

"Well," I said, "what is it?"

"Joseph," she repeated; and I knew by her tone that there was something up.

I opened my eyes, and saw Maria standing beside me with the handkercher in her hand. She had been to my pockets and found it.

"What's this?" she said.

"A handkercher," I said.

"A handkercher!" she said. "Whose handkercher?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," I said. "I picked it up in the street, and was going to give it to you, only I forgot it."

"How do you look, Joseph, when you're telling a lie?" she said.

"What do you mean?" I said.

"I'll tell you what I mean," she said. "Some woman give you this, Joseph. I've suspected you for some time; but you can't deceive me, now I have the hocklar proof."

"Oh, how can you think such a thing, Maria?" I said. "I'm sure I never gave you any cause."

"This handkercher!" she said; and she looked at me quite awful.

Well, sir, I took a bitter oath that I had picked it up, but she wouldn't have it.

"Why, what nonsense," I said; "it's real lace, and got a coronet in the corner. I dare say it belongs to a duchess."

"Ah," she says; "it ain't the first time I've heard of duchesses falling in love with professionals. Joseph, you're a willin'."

It cut me to the quick to be called a name like that, and me innocent as an unborn babe. But nothing would pacify her. She worked herself up into high strikes in no time. Thinking that she would soon cry and kick herself out, I lay quiet, and never said a word. But that wouldn't do. She got up in a fury, threw my wig into the fire as usual, stamped upon my serenading hat, and then pulled all the clothes off me. She went on like a mad woman, sir, and roused the whole house.

"I'll go home to my parents," she said.

"Don't be foolish," I said. "You know your ma is out a washing, and the workhouse is shut long ago; they won't let you see the old gentleman to-night."

"This comes of marrying one beneath me in station," she said.

Now she had never said that to me before; but I knew now that it had been buried in her breast, and that she had been thinking of it for years.

"Oh, Maria," I said. "I never thought that you would have thrown that up in my face. If you do come of a high family," I said, "love's a leveller."

"Love!" she says; "do you dare to talk to me of love, false one?"

"I ain't a false one, Maria; I'm your true loving 'usband," I said.

"The handkercher!" she said, holding it up like an accusing spectre. "Go to your duchess, go!" And with that she flounced out of the room, and sat half the night on the stairs a weeping and sobbing and beating the boards with her heels, so that nobody could get a wink of sleep in the 'ouse.

When she came up in the morning, she was as cold as a frog, but quiet. She never spoke all breakfast-time; but, after I had blacked my face, and just as I was cutting a paper collar, she rises, and draws herself up to her full height, and says:

"Joseph," she says, "I'll never live under the same roof with you no more. I'll have a divorce."

"Very well," I says; "if that's your temper, have a divorce. Only it strikes me that it won't run to it, unless you have a good deal more money than we've got," I said.

All I had, sir, was one-and-fivepence-half-penny, and though I knew that divorces had been much reduced in price, I didn't think they had come down so low as that.

"Don't you think," I said, "it would be cheaper to refer it to arbitration? I don't mind standing by what your pa says."

"Oh, I dare say," she said; "you and pa are very thick, because you give him bacca. I choose ma."

"Very well," I said; "you have ma and I'll have pa."

So that was agreed upon, and Maria put on her bonnet and went off for her ma, and I, without waiting to wash the black off my face, went across to the workhouse for the old man.

The first thing the old gentleman said, on getting outside the gates, was, "Ain't we going to take a cab, Joseph?"

"No, father," I says, "cabs is for weddings; but it's divorce that's on to-day; and under those circumstances you don't feel inclined to go to the expense."

The old gentleman being rather weak on the pins, it took us some time to get down to the Brill, where I lodged, and Maria and her ma were there waiting for us.

"Here you are," I said; "here's my referee."

"And here's mine," said Maria, pointing to her ma, who, having her sleeves up, had evidently been summoned away in the midst of her washing.

"Now," I said, "go ahead."

Well, sir, of course Maria had no facts to

go upon, except that she had found the handkercher in my pocket. I tore the case for the prosecution all to tatters, and Maria hadn't got a rag to stand upon, except the handkercher.

"Now," I says, "pa, what's your verdict?"

"Not guilty," he says, without leaving the box.

"Hear, hear," I says. "And what's yours, ma?"

"Well," she says, talking quite proud, just like her daughter, both having been at boarding-school, "I should like to see the handkercher."

Maria showed her the handkercher.

"Why," she says, "it's the finest cambric, with real lace round it; it's worth half a guinea, if it's worth a penny."

"Very well, then, mum, what do you say?"

"Well," replied Maria's ma, "I say pawn it."

"Them's my sentiments exactly," I says; "pawn it, and let's have rumpsteak and onions for dinner."

Maria vowed that her own flesh and blood had turned against her; but when I brought in a quarter of rum and a pint and a half of old ale, and she'd had a drop, she came round a little, and at last agreed to go out and pawn the handkercher. She got seven-and-sixpence on it; and we had a nice bit of hot dinner, and the old gentleman got quite convivial and, sang Away with Melancholy, and we passed as pleasant an afternoon, sir, as I'd wish to see.

Arter that, happiness, sir, was restored to my domestic hearth; only I couldn't help thinking that things was a deal too pleasant to last. Maria was all sugar, never scolded, never was jealous, and was always singing. I couldn't make it out at all. Formerly she had despised my line of hart, and called my songs nonsense and rubbish. But now she was a singing of them every day, and beautiful she sang them too; especially Lucy Neal, and the Old Folks at Home, which was all the go then. I never thought that she had such talent.

But what's her little game? I thought to myself. She's dropped the jealousy and she's dropped the words, and though she doesn't say much, she's always a singing, and two or three times when I come in unexpected, I caught her putting away some finery that she'd been making, as if she didn't want me to see it. When I caught her hiding that finery, sir, I thought of the young man at the tripe-shop. I'll tell you how that was, sir. One day, when we had half a peck of peas and Maria was shelling them, she found a shuck with nine peas in it.

"I'll put that over the door," she said, "and the first man as comes in will be my second 'usband."

It was just after we had had a noise about my stopping out late that she said this. Well, sir, the first person as come in was the young man from the tripe-shop. And Maria says to him, right before me,

"George," she says, "you are destined to be my second 'usband."

I don't mind confessing, sir, that I had a touch of the green-eyed monster myself. One

afternoon, when I came in to my bit of dinner, there was nobody in the room. I knocked at the door of the lodger on the same landing, a young woman in the shoe-binding line, and asked if she knew where my missus was? "All right," she says; "she'll be with you directly."

I went back to my room and sat down, and in about five minutes the door opened and somebody came in. I looked round and saw before me—what do you think, sir? A tall woman, dressed in a short red petticoat, with a turban on her head, and her face blacked!

There was no mistaking that figure-head. It was Maria.

"How do you like me now?" she says.

"Why, Maria," I says, "whatever are you up to?"

In answer to that, sir, she whips up an old tambourine, and strikes up

Rosa, Rosa, Sambo come,
Make a little fire in de back room;

Oh, Rose, coal black Rose,

I wish I may be burned

If I don't love Rose.

And then she did the tambourine with her thumb, and jingled it to the time, and banged it against her head and elbows just as if she had been born to it.

"Will that suit?" she says.

"Why, Maria," I said to her quite serious, "what does this mean?"

"Well," she says, "it means, Joseph, that I don't think you draw by yourself; and I'm going to help you. What you want," she says, "is the fee-male element in your performances."

"And do you mean to say, Maria, that you're going out with me in the streets like that?"

"Yes," she says, "I do mean to say it. In future, Joseph, where you go, I go. I'm sure it will improve the business, and being with you, I can always have my eye upon you."

And she did go out with me, sir; and that was how fee-males was first introduced into the nigger serenading business. Lots of fellows have claimed the honour of the invention; but it was me as did it, me and Maria.

There's lots of fee-males in the profession now, but Maria was the first; and if you are in the History line, perhaps you will be good enough to put it down.

Thank you, sir, the same as before, with lemon.

SOWING THE DRAGON'S TEETH.

CADMUS, Agenor's son, the dragon slew,
Hard by the cliff, a monster fierce and vast,
O'ershadowing half Parnassus; herds and men
Had fled his hot breath, helpless and aghast.
Exulting in that conquest, helmed and plumed,
Glittering like Mars, fresh from the battle-field,
The hero shook his ponderous ashen spear,
And waved in the blue air his golden shield.

Disdaining help from either gods or men,
Forgetting Heaven in his boastful pride,
He sought a herdsman's shed and seized the plough,
The goad, and harness shaped from tough bull hide,

And led the large-eyed oxen, crescent horned,
Huge dappled creatures, stalwart, strong of limb,
And drove them to the plain; his Spartan dogs,
Both tired and sullen, lagging after him.

The lowering purple slowly deepening gloomed,
And darkened blacker in the furthest west;
The rooks flew by in drifting funeral lines
Below the eagle's long-since plundered nest.
Then suddenly a gleam of orange fire
Lit up beneath the lowest vapoury bar,
And burnt a gap out, fading gleam by gleam,
Till sparkled forth the first keen evening star.

On went the cleaving share, sharp beaked and keen,
Rippling the fallow in long level rows,
Tearing the sluggish clay with tooth of steel;
Out like a puffing sail his mantle blows,
As 'tween the stilts bends Cadmus at his toil,
Trenching the fresh black earth, and showers of seed
Tossing behind him on the soft rich soil.

Sowing the dragon's teeth; but Jove, intent
To check such pride, now blotted star by star,
And cast forth winds over the new-ploughed lands,
That swept with wild beast howling from afar.
The storm-clouds rolled in billows swift and black,
And slanting rain beat fiercely from the south,
While splashing fire high, high upon the crag,
Lit with a glare each lurid cavern's mouth.

The very mountain torrents shone with flame,
As Cadmus stood beside the steers intent,
Resting the plough and leaning on his goad.
The sky was wrapped in fire, and lightning went
Splintering against Parnassus, then the earth
Teemed with long lines of warriors, file on file,
Gleaming in phalanx threatening to close,
And stretching o'er the plain, mile after mile.

But Cadmus to Minerva knelt and prayed,
Then slew the oxen, and, with cloven plough,
Offered to the wise goddess sacrifice,
And raised his hands to her and bent his brow.
So Zeus relented, and a war began
Between those warriors of the dragon's seed;
Keen swords flash out, and hissing javelins fly,
Helms split, and bucklers cleave, and many bleed.

On tramped the phalanx, as the spearmen ran
Fast to join battle, and the bowmen drew
Up to the head their shafts, and clouds of darts
Poured on the vanguard, while hoarse trumpets blew,
And on the shield smote fast the crashing axe,
While banners rose and fell above the slain;
And shouts of wounded giants filled the air,
And charging swordsmen fought o'er that wild plain.

Far as the eye could reach were grappling men;
Long ranks of struggling warriors, lance to lance,
And sword to sword, in the dim twilight moved
Like frenzied vision in a madman's trance;
Legions of warriors rose from out the dark
With supernatural strength, and with the wrath
Of the old giants smitten down by Jove.
Soon the black earth grew red, and red each path.

They fell in swathes, like corn before the steel
Of hurried reapers; ere the sun arose,
They sank where they had risen, rank by rank,
File facing file; then clearer grew the sky,

And out the stars came sparkling, as the moon
Launched from the cloud-bank; Cadmus swiftly then
Strode back to Thebes, and after him like slaves
Came the survivors of those dragon men.

AIR.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

It is solely through the impressions conveyed to us by our senses that we know what we do know. Passions and propensities may be innate and instinctive, but all knowledge of facts and things is acquired.

Much of what our senses acquaint us with, are not material substances. Thus, light, electricity, heat,* sound, are not things, but motions. Formerly, with the exception of sound, they were called imponderable fluids. Imponderable, unweighable, in truth they are; but instead of being fluids, they are forces. They are the life of the universe, its manifestation of vitality. And—as to weighing them—one force, attraction or gravitation, is the source and origin of all weight.

Other objects whose existence is disclosed to us by our senses—the earth, the waters, the woods, and the winds—are tangible, material, ponderable. They are things which have weight and substance, being composed of what men have agreed to call matter, in distinction to spirit.

There are three forms of matter known to us; the solid, the liquid, and the gaseous. A fourth form is suspected, and more than suspected; namely, the ethereal, which is supposed to be to the lightest gas, what the lightest gas is to the densest liquid. It has been thought that all substances, all material things, may be capable of assuming each of these three forms, if placed under the required conditions. We see many objects in daily use pass through them all without difficulty. A lump of sulphur readily melts, and as readily passes off in fumes. Ice is easily converted into water, and water as easily into steam. Camphor speedily takes its departure, leaving no residue behind. In a closed glass jar, it is volatilised, and then re-solidified upon the sides of the jar. What is still more curious, one substance, usually seen in the form of gas, carbonic acid, may be reduced to a fluid state, and then, by artificial freezing, to a solid. Therefore, although we are ignorant of the conditions required to transform hydrogen gas, for instance, to a liquid or a solid, we have no right to assume that such a transformation is impossible. All we can say is, that hydrogen is known to us only in the gaseous state.

The air we breathe is a permanent gas, and has never been made liquid, still less solid. It does not change its state, to whatever circumstances of temperature and pressure it is subjected. It has neither taste nor smell of its own, only what it borrows from foreign bodies with which it is laden.

Air is said to be invisible and colourless; which is correct only when it is presented to the eye in small or limited quantity, of equal temperature throughout its mass, and laden with a proper proportion of watery vapour varying with that temperature. Otherwise, air is perfectly visible. We see its colour in the azure sky; we see its substance in the purple veil which hangs between us and the distant mountain. We see it when certain conditions of dryness (as during some easterly winds) diminish its transparency. We see it when, in the shape of a mirage, it assumes the semblance of a sheet of water. Whenever two strata of air of considerably different temperatures come in contact (as when a cool breeze blows over heated sands, or on the top of a burning brick-kiln, or by the side of a furnace chimney), we see the two airs trying to mingle, as clearly as we see white syrup, still undissolved, curling and circling in a glass of water. We see what air holds in clouds, fogs, mists, and hazes. We see the air in the glowing tints which it refracts in the west and reflects in the east after the sun is below the horizon. When the sky is clear, we behold the air in sunsets and sunrises, as distinctly as we behold a diamond in its sparkling.

“As light as air” is a proverbial expression. Air, nevertheless, is heavier than is generally imagined. It presses on us with a load of fifteen pounds on every square inch of surface of our bodies, although we do not so much as suspect its weight. The reason why we do not feel the pressure is, because the air penetrates everywhere; it presses in all directions, both within and without our organs. The result of the equilibrium of the two pressures is as if they did not exist at all.

With the barometer at thirty inches and the thermometer at freezing-point, a cubic foot of dry air weighs more than an ounce and a quarter. The weight, therefore, of the air contained in any apartment of respectable dimensions amounts to something considerable. The total weight of the entire atmosphere is equal to that of a solid globe of lead sixty miles in diameter.

That air has weight, is proved by a very simple experiment. A bottle, from which the air is exhausted, is weighed. Air is allowed to fill it; it is then weighed again, and an augmentation of weight is perceptible. The proof strikes one as being of the easiest; but to carry it out, two instruments were necessary which science did not possess in the olden time, namely, an air-pump, and an exact and delicate balance. In handling a bladder full of air, we do not feel the weight of the contents. We only feel the weight of the bladder, because we are handling it *in air*. A similar effect would be produced on handling a bladder full of water *in water*; the weight of the water would be imperceptible.

Air also strikes us as being lighter than it really is, in consequence of its elasticity. There is a springiness in its contact which immediately conveys the idea of great legerity. When we see the boundings of a ball filled

* See Fire, All the Year Round, vol. vi. p. 393.

with air, or feel the supple yieldings of an air-cushion; when a warm and gentle breeze fans our cheek, we say to ourselves, "How light the air is!" but when we have to meet it in a storm, or a hurricane, we perceive at once that it has something besides velocity, and that it must have also weight to give it the momentum which it is capable of exerting with such crushing effect. It is the pressure of the air which enables the calf to suck its mother's milk, the leech to gorge itself with blood, and the fly to walk up the pane of glass. The pressure of the atmosphere even adds heartiness to the application of a kiss.

And yet the ponderousness of air was denied by the ancients! It was regarded as an illusion of the senses. The boldest free-thinkers ventured no further than to entertain their doubts. Galileo first discovered the weight of air, inferring it from the fact that water, in pumps, remained arrested and suspended at a height of about thirty-three feet. After him, Torricelli, and then Boyle (the inventor of the air-pump), confirmed his ideas by further experiment. In the seventeenth century, Pascal had demonstrated the material existence of air by the mere force of reasoning, showing, in his *Abrégé sur le Vide*, that it is a tangible and heavy body.

During the first half of the last century, and before it, the notions about air were excessively crude. Satan was the Prince of Air, as the Queen's eldest son is the Prince of Wales; and his subjects, the witches, mounted on brooms, rode through his realms to attend his drawing-rooms. All gases were air, and the same; their differences were not known. There was merely the trifling distinction that some were respirable, and others fatal to the animals breathing them. No suspicion was entertained of the absorption and assimilation of the different gases by animals and vegetables. The air contained everything—the whole fossil (mineral), vegetable, and animal kingdoms; and nothing was ever taken out of it. For, an animal, when dead, being exposed to the air, is, in a little time, carried off, bones and all; vegetables, by putrefaction, become volatile; and all kinds of salts, sulphurs, and metals, convertible into fume, are thus capable of being mixed with the air. Well might Boerhaave take it for an universal chaos or colluvies of all the kinds of created bodies.

Air—elementary air it was called—was made of the vapour of the sun (and perhaps it is); it was condensed and thickened ether; it was mechanically producible, being nothing else than the matter of other bodies altered, so as to become permanently elastic. For, solid bodies, unsuspected of elasticity, being plunged in corrosive unelastic menstrua, would, by a comminution of their parts in the conflict, afford a considerable quantity of permanently elastic air. To account for its elasticity, some believed the corpuscles of air to be branched; others held them to be so many minute flocculi, resembling tufts of wool; others conceived them round.

like hoops; or curled in corkscrews, like shavings of wood; or coiled in spirals, like steel watch-springs; all which ingenious hypotheses are yet unconfirmed by the microscope, or otherwise. But, into what sloughs of absurdity does the human mind straggle when it follows fancy instead of observation! Air is here imaged, as its exactest types, by thickets of bushes, wool mattresses, sacks of shavings, and spring cushions.

Newton put the thing another way, attributing the elasticity of air to a repulsive force between its particles, after their original separation by heat. And indeed, of the two forces, attraction and repulsion, the latter would seem to reign amongst gases, the former amongst liquids. The particles which compose elastic fluids avoid each other as much as circumstances allow; those which make up liquids, hug each other as closely as they can; it requires the superior force of heat to cause a divorce between them.

"The atmosphere," from *ατμος*, vapour, means the sphere of vapours. Maury likens it to another ocean enveloping the entire world over the ocean of water, which covers only two-thirds of it. All the water of the one weighs about four hundred times as much as all the air of the other.

As to the height of the atmosphere, the received opinion is that its upper surface—if it has a surface—cannot be nearer to us than fifty, nor more remote than five hundred miles. But it is impossible to fix any precise limit, by reason of its growing tenuity, as it is released from the pressure of its own superincumbent mass.

It is something to know that more than three-fourths of the entire atmosphere is below the level of the highest mountains. The other fourth is rarefied and expanded, in consequence of the diminished pressure, until the height of many miles be attained. From the reflexion of the sun's rays after he has set, or before he rises above the horizon, it is calculated that the upper fourth part must extend at least forty or forty-five miles higher. Sir John Herschel has shown that, at the height of eighty or ninety miles, there is a vacuum far more complete than any which we can produce by any air-pump. In 1783, a meteor, computed to be half a mile in diameter, and fifty miles from the earth, was heard to explode. As sound cannot travel through a vacuum, it was inferred that the explosion took place within the limits of the atmosphere. Herschel thence concludes that the aerial ocean is at least fifty miles deep.

Maury's illustration of the way in which the atmosphere is packed, and of its diminished density as we ascend in it, is admirable.

If we imagine the lightest down, in layers of equal weight, and ten feet thick, to be carded into a pit several miles deep, we can readily perceive how that the bottom layer, though it might have been ten feet thick when it first fell, yet with the weight of the accumulated and superincumbent mass, it might now, the pit being full, be compressed into a layer of only a

few inches in thickness ; while the top layer of all, being uncompressed, would be exceedingly light, and still ten feet thick : so that a person ascending from the bottom of the pit would find the layers of equal weight thicker and thicker until he reached the top.

Although one of their elements (oxygen) is the same, air and water have but few qualities in common ; they are both transparent and both fluid ; that is to say, mobile, not solid, and that is all. Yet so great is the affinity existing between these two very dissimilar bodies, whose common function is to sustain life, that neither water completely deprived of air, nor air completely devoid of water, is to be had except by chemical means. Thus the atmosphere is a grand reservoir ; and the supply is afforded with such regularity, that the southern hemisphere has been likened to the boiler, and the northern to the condenser, of a still.

Hence, although the quantity of water contained in oceans, seas, and fresh-water lakes, strikes us at once as enormous, still there is more water in the world than meets the eye, or than is even suspected by mankind in general. Forests contain, in their tissues, millions upon millions of tons. The water and the air which are contained in living beings form so large a portion of their mass, that, if thoroughly dried and exhausted, they would become mere shrivelled scraps of skin and bone. Birds and insects are greatly indebted to air for their making up, and for their general portliness. The quantity of water which is visibly and invisibly held in the atmosphere, is incalculable.

Following out the discrepancies of the two, we find that water, so long as it continues water, shrinks and swells but slightly with change of temperature, and yields scarcely at all under outward force. Air, on the contrary, contracts and expands remarkably under the influences of cold and heat. It is elastic. There is no known limit to the degree of its condensation under pressure, nor to its rarefaction when pressure is removed. It adapts itself to, and fills, whatever extent of space it is allowed to occupy. The air-gun is a beautiful exemplification of this property. Condensed air, suddenly let loose, rushes out to acquire the state of ordinary air, with such force as to drive a bullet. Instead of the three forms so readily assumed by water, air undergoes no change in its constitution (except the different degrees of density and tenuity) through any of the ordinary influences by which it is affected ; nor is any influence known capable of effecting such a change. The air's elastic force is like that of every other gas composed of molecules, which would run away from, and mutually shun, each other, if they were not prevented by the vessel which holds them, or the weight which compresses them. There is a great difference between the elasticity of gases and of solid bodies. When a gas ceases to be compressed, it is not only expanded, but it continues to occupy a greater space, and appears in a larger volume than before ; whereas, solid elastic bodies, re-

lieved from compression, simply reassume the form and the size which they had before.

Water and air are both fluids ; their particles move freely amongst each other in all directions. But one, as we have seen, is an elastic fluid, or gas ; the other, a non-elastic fluid, or liquid. Gases mix readily ; many liquids will not mix. Water mixes neither with mercury nor with oil. Water itself is not a mixture, but a chemical combination and union. It is not oxygen *and* hydrogen, but oxygen *with* hydrogen ; whereas air *is* a mixture and not a chemical combination of gases. Consequently, air's pretensions to be called an element are much better founded than water's ; for the great bulk of its mass is made up of uncombined elements which cannot yet be reduced to any simpler form.

Out of one hundred parts of atmospheric air ninety-nine and a half consist of oxygen and nitrogen or azote, mixed in the proportion of twenty-one of oxygen to seventy of azote, by volume, and of twenty-three to seventy-seven, by weight. It thus appears that the specific gravity of the two gases does not greatly differ. Oxygen is a trifle heavier, azote a trifle lighter, than air. In round numbers, it may be stated that air is mainly composed of one-fifth oxygen, and four-fifths azote.

Oxygen is the vital gas which serves for combustion, and is indispensable to animal life. If coals burn in a grate, it is the oxygen which keeps them burning. If you place a lighted candle under a bell-glass, it goes out as soon as it has consumed all the oxygen. If you put an animal under the same, as soon as it has breathed all the oxygen, it dies. It is the act of breathing atmospheric air which generates the heat that warms our bodies. Fire is produced by the oxygen contained in the atmosphere combining with other bodies, as wood and coal. Now hydrogen and carbon are also two grand combustibles. Either of them, combined with oxygen, becomes at once the parent of heat. When the oxygen gathered by the blood during its passage through the lungs reaches with it the other organs, it finds there hydrogen and carbon. It combines with them and produces warmth. Our breathing, therefore, is the same thing as lighting a gentle fire inside us. Instead of blowing the kitchen fire with a bellows, we draw the air into our lungs with the bellows of our chest. The whole secret of respiration or breathing is, that the oxygen of the air combines with the hydrogen and carbon of our bodies, and so gives rise to warmth. Cold-blooded animals are chilly, solely on account of the small quantity of oxygen required to keep them alive.

The remaining half-part of the hundred consists of carbonic acid and watery vapour, whose quantity varies according to season and locality. To verify the presence of carbonic acid, you have only to expose lime-water to the air ; you will soon see a white film form on the surface, which is nothing else but carbonate of lime, that is, chalk. This small proportion of

carbonic acid amounts, in the aggregate, to an immense total. There is more than enough carbon in the atmosphere to replace all the coal that has been burnt since coal was discovered, besides supplying all the charcoal contained in every vegetable all over the world. Air also contains the vapour of water. If a cold and bright body, say a silver vase, is suddenly brought into warm air, you will very shortly see its surface dimmed by a coating of dew.

For our knowledge of the composition of air we are indebted to Lavoisier, whose experiments on this very body led him to the theory which bears his name, and which is the foundation of modern chemistry. That oxygen and azote make air, is thus demonstrated. Put mercury under a bell-glass filled with air, and then raise the mercury to a high temperature, but lower than its boiling-point. If this temperature be maintained for several days, the volume of air in the bell-glass will be found to diminish gradually, and at the same time there will be formed on the surface of the mercury little red scales, whose quantity will go on increasing. What takes place in this experiment? The reduced volume of air indicates an absorption, and the formation of a new body on the mercury suggests that the metal has appropriated to itself the portion of air which has disappeared. In fact, if the scales are collected and exposed to strong heat, they are transformed into mercury, after disengaging a gas which is found to be oxygen. Oxygen, therefore, exists in the air; its combination with the mercury gave rise, on the surface of the metal, to the body which is known as oxide of mercury.

By prolonging the operation for a sufficient length of time, a point is reached when there is no further diminution of air in the bell-glass, nor of scales in the mercurial bath; the cause of which is, that all the oxygen contained in the air has been absorbed by the metal. Nevertheless, the air has not entirely disappeared. There remains a gaseous residue under the bell-glass; and that residue is composed solely of azote. Air, therefore, is composed of oxygen and azote. If it contain any other gas in very small quantity, its presence is not betrayed in consequence of the trifling volume of the air experimented on.

The reader is reminded, only by way of remembrance, that plants, under the stimulus of sunlight, take in and solidify carbonic acid, and give out oxygen. The leaves of the forest, the lichen on the rock, are strained out and stolen from the air. Air has such influence on vegetation, that there are plants which live and thrive with no other nourishment than air and the moisture it contains. Vegetation has the property of restoring to the atmosphere the corrupted, mephitic, and often mortal air in which vegetables are capable of living. By giving out oxygen and absorbing carbonic acid, plants render air salubrious to be breathed by animals. By an admirable reciprocity, the plant

grows and flourishes on what the animal rejects; and what the plant exhales, gives life to the animal.

REMINISCENCES OF BROGG.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

AND NOW, the first introduction to Mr. Brogg over, I found myself rapidly becoming friendly with the revered gentleman. I was a great deal with him, both at our club-room and also at his own house. It was a happy time—perhaps it was too happy to continue very long. I saw, and did not like, an occasional tendency to absence of mind and uneasy reflection in my friend. There appeared to be seasons when he was dissatisfied with his life, with his career, with himself. It was only occasionally, however, as I have said, that he fell into this condition, and in the intervals between such attacks we were very happy and comfortable.

A friend of ours—no other, indeed, than the immortal Grampus—was engaged in a lawsuit against one of his neighbours, *in re*, the barking of a dog, which animal the said neighbour kept tied up in his back garden; and it appeared that this dog was so fond of the sound of his own voice, that neither by day nor by night did he cease to give tongue, barking at all hours, and under all circumstances.

Now this dog-dispute, after being the motive of a long correspondence, beginning very politely and ending very savagely, became at last a matter for the lawyers, who, having got hold of it, determined to try the merits of the case before twelve English tradesmen of more than average stupidity. To the individual who kept the dog this lawsuit was simply a boon. He was a retired, tradesman, with plenty of money and nothing to do, and finding inexpressible pleasure in making use of such expressions as "My solicitor will wait on you," or "You will hear from my solicitor," with the like imposing and alarming phrases. I think, moreover, that the "other party," namely, Grampus himself, also took pleasure in the thought that he was engaged in a lawsuit, talking of it freely wherever he went.

It had been suggested to Grampus by his lawyer that he should bring forward some gentleman deeply versed in intellectual matters, some person of high genius, in fact, to bear witness as to the detrimental influence on mental labour which such a noise as that of which Grampus complained might be expected to exercise; to prove, in short, that the nuisance *was* a nuisance, calculated to interfere with the artist's professional pursuits, and so, to some considerable extent, affect his pecuniary resources by hindering him in the exercise and practice of his profession. Of course Grampus was not long in perceiving that this was a case in which he must seek the assistance of our illustrious friend, nor was he slow to promise that assistance as quickly as it was asked. "If

my name can be of any use to you, my dear Grampus," said C. J., "I need hardly tell you how completely it is at your service." When Grampus told his legal adviser whose testimony he had secured, the lawyer looked a little blue, and remarked that he thought "some gentleman of greater ability would have been better for the purpose." Grampus broke out at this into a long tirade concerning the extraordinary abilities of C. J., and how nobody else living could serve his cause so well in the present emergency. But the lawyer seemed still unconvinced, and said that he should have preferred the testimony of Thunderson, or of Shammy, R.A., or somebody of that sort, very much indeed.

There was quite a little gathering of intellectual characters in the court on the day when Grampus's case was to come on. The habitués of Poets' Corner were all there to a man. There was a good deal of smiling and whispering (apparently facetious) among the gentlemen of the robe, as there often is when a cause of an unusual kind, and with no very momentous issue at stake, is about to come on.

The facetious tone was evidently to predominate in this case throughout. Even the counsel for the plaintiff, Grampus, fell very early into this line of business, and there was something, too, almost apologetical about his address, as if he really felt that it was a very unimportant business, and hardly worth all this disturbance. The artist, he said, belonged proverbially to the *genus irritabile*. He could not be judged by the same rules as other people. And if this was the case with the artist in general, he believed that he might say that it was specially so with this artist in particular, he being of a peculiarly nervous temperament, and very easily put off his intellectual feed—if he might so express himself—and incapacitated for thought and study. There was a great deal to this purpose, and the jury were asked if they knew what a dog was, and what the barking of a dog was, and whether the noise made by a barking dog was compatible with deep thought and serious meditation? And then the witnesses began to appear.

At length the moment came when Caractacus Jones Brogg was called. I had never before known what those initials C. J. stood for, and they rather staggered me. He ascended the witness-box steps with considerable dignity, and we thought to ourselves that now, at any rate, we should be serious.

The preliminaries of swearing the witness having been gone through, the witness was asked whether he was a friend of plaintiff's, how long he had known him, what he knew of his temperament, habits of life, and the like. And then Mr. Codger (the counsel for the plaintiff) thought he might get, without further delay, to matters bearing directly on the subject of the suit.

MR. CODGER. And now, Mr. Brogg, I will, with your permission, ask you what, in your

opinion, would be the effect upon such a mind as that of your friend of the peculiar nuisance of which he is come here to complain?

WITNESS. My opinion is, that it would utterly incapacitate him for all mental exertion of what kind soever, and that it would render him generally irritable and unsettled.

MR. CODGER. Is it your opinion that my client would suffer in purse by such interruption?

WITNESS. Undoubtedly, seeing that he would be disqualified from pursuing those studies through whose agency his very exquisite works are produced.

MR. CODGER. You regard my client's works as works of great value?

WITNESS. I do.

MR. CODGER. They are a great deal sought after, I apprehend?

WITNESS. They are—ahem! ahem!—yes, a great deal sought after.

MR. CODGER. So that, in fact, if my client fails to produce these works for which he is so distinguished, he is failing to gain a certain sum of money which would otherwise have come to him?

WITNESS. Which in the event of the work finding a purchaser would certainly have come to him. Yes.

CODGER. Just so. Then it appears to you that the individual who by any means hinders my client from producing work, does in fact hinder him from receiving money?

WITNESS. Supposing, as I have said before, that the work on which he was engaged should find a purchaser when it was completed.

CODGER. (uneasily). Just so. Thank you, Mr. Brogg. I shall not require to trouble you any further.

But though the counsel for the plaintiff had done with Mr. Brogg, the counsel for the defendant had not, and he now rose with a very evil expression of countenance, to invite the witness's attention to a few questions of his own. The name of this gentleman was Screw, and he was considered a dab at cross-examination.

SCREW. Stop a moment, Mr.—eh,—Mr.—Brogg. There are one or two little matters which have come out in the course of your examination in chief, and in connexion with which I will, with your permission, put one or two very simple questions. It was the policy of my learned friend—and I will say that my learned friend is as bold as he is learned to adopt such a policy—to aim at convincing the jury that my client, by keeping a little dog upon his premises, hinders this Mr. Grampus from working. This point of course I shall presently be in a position to controvert, but for the present let it pass. My learned friend next goes a step further, and insinuates that to hinder this Mr. Grampus from working, is, in other words, to stand between this gentleman and the reception of certain sums of money of greater or less magnitude. Now this kind of language used by my learned friend gives us to understand that Mr. Grampus's pictures and money—sums of money—are convertible terms.

And here it is that I fail to follow my learned friend altogether, and here it is also, Mr. Brogg, that your assistance becomes valuable to me. You are, I believe, Mr. Grampus's friend—intimate friend?

WITNESS. I am.

SCREW. And, doubtless, you are acquainted with that gentleman's art-career from the very beginning?

WITNESS. I believe that I am.

SCREW. You believe that you are. Very good. Now, sir, you will doubtless be able to tell me whether certain information which I have received as to that career, from the highest source—mark me, Mr. Brogg, *from the very highest source*—is, or is not, correct. (The witness made no observation, and the learned counsel went on.) I have here a list of Mr. Grampus's works, compiled from the most accurate sources, and to which is appended an account of the ultimate fate of each one of the pictures. With your permission I will read the list over to you, and if there are any mistakes contained in it, you will, no doubt, be obliging enough to check me as I go on. ("Ahem! ahem!" coughed the learned counsel, making a prodigious noise; and then, getting out the inevitable double eye-glass, he went on:) Boadicea haranguing the Britons stands first on my list, eighteen feet by ten, in the artist's possession.

WITNESS. It is *not* in the artist's possession, unhappily.

SCREW. Oh, indeed; not in the artist's possession? What, is it sold, then?

WITNESS. No, it is not sold.

SCREW. Not sold, and not in the artist's possession. May I ask what has become of this immortal work?

WITNESS. It has ceased to exist. (At this there was a roar of laughter.) The artist, in a moment of disappointment, destroyed the picture.

SCREW. Oh, very well; if the work has ceased to exist, we must get on to something else. I come next, then, to No. 2, Moses in the Bulrushes, fourteen feet by twelve, in the artist's maternal aunt's possession. (Laughter.) The artist, finding these large high-class works unsaleable, comes down very much in his notions, and gives in next, No. 3, a Reaper, two feet by eighteen inches, and this picture sells to a Mr. Green—of whom more hereafter. Am I correct, Mr. Brogg?

WITNESS. Entirely so.

SCREW. Then I will proceed with the list. No. 4, Murder of the Young Princes in the Tower, possession of the artist; No. 5, Ugolino, a study, possession of the artist; No. 6, Infant Minstrelsy, sold to Mr. Green; No. 7, The Misanthrope, possession of the artist; No. 8, Mariana, sold to Mr. Green; No. 9, Triumphs of Music, possession of the artist; No. 10, The Leper of the City of Aoste, possession of the artist; No. 11, Bagpipes at the Eternal City, sold to Mr. Green. Gentlemen of the jury, I

might go on, but it is needless. It is enough that I hold in my hand a list of the remaining works of Mr. Grampus, and that I assure you they are all either in the possession of the artist himself or that of this Mr. Green. But, gentlemen, this list does not show Mr. Grampus in the light of a prosperous artist. It cannot be contended that this gentleman, when engaged in producing these works, is, in reality, engaged in a process akin to the coining of money. Why, his works are all either in his own possession or in that of Mr. Green. And now, gentlemen, with one word more, we may dismiss this section of the subject. Who is this Mr. Green? Can you tell us anything about him, Mr. Brogg?

WITNESS. I had rather not say anything about Mr. Green.

SCREW. I can't help that, sir; you must. Come, Mr. Brogg, were you ever intimate with him?

WITNESS. Yes; at one time I may say that I was.

SCREW. Oh, you were; and did you like him?

WITNESS. Yes; I always found him very agreeable.

SCREW. You always found him very agreeable. Just so. Ever think him at all eccentric?

WITNESS. Well, he used to say queer things sometimes.

SCREW. Did you ever hear him say that he considered that the whole human race were spoilt by the possession of noses, and that he looked forward to the day when he should be entrusted (by commission) with the office of removing the feature in question from every human countenance?

WITNESS. Yes, I have heard him say that.

SCREW. Oh, you have! Did you ever hear him express any opinion on Mr. Grampus's works? Yes, yes; I dare say you'd rather not, but you must.

WITNESS. I have heard him say that he hated them, and only bought them because he felt too happy, and required something to make him uneasy.

SCREW. Very good, very good indeed, Mr. Brogg. Now, perhaps you are in a condition to say what is his present condition, and his place of abode? Perhaps you can tell us, Mr. Brogg?

WITNESS. With submission, I would rather not answer that question.

SCREW. Then, sir, I will answer it for you. Gentlemen of the jury, Mr. Green, the only patron of Mr. Grampus's art, is at this moment a pauper-lunatic in the wards of Colney Hatch Asylum. He suffers under a painful conviction that nature has gifted him with a tail.

At this there was a general roar of laughter, and our friend, wearing an expression of pain and disgust, was about to descend from the witness-box, when he was arrested by the voice of the dreadful Screw, who, it appeared, had not even yet done with him.

SCREW. Stop a moment, if you please, Mr.—Mr. Brogg. I must trouble you, I am afraid, with one or two questions on another matter.

You appeared just now to answer certain questions of my learned friend's as to the effect likely to be produced on Mr. Grampus's health of mind by the joyous barking of a little dog kept by his neighbour, my excellent client. Now, Mr. Brogg, as you have given your opinion upon this subject in an *ex cathedra* manner, and, in fact, as one of the initiated, I would fain take the liberty of asking you whether you are in the habit of painting pictures yourself?

WITNESS. Yes—that is, to some extent. I have painted—I should say I have begun—several pictures.

SCREW. Mr. Brogg, are you an artist?

WITNESS. Not exactly a professional artist, but I am acquainted—

SCREW. Not a professional artist. Exactly. Are you in any other way so engaged professionally, as to be able to speak authoritatively in this matter?

WITNESS. I am engaged in the study of the—of the law, to some extent.

SCREW. Oh, indeed. He! he! quite one of us. But, sir, you will allow me to say that your studies of the law, however slight or profound they may have been, can scarcely enable you to pronounce an opinion in such a case as the present. The fanciful—nay, almost playful—pursuit of the art of painting needs not that silence, that seclusion, that, I may almost say, awe-struck solitude which are needed for the carrying out of the majestic study of the law of England! No, sir. The two cases are not parallel, and I should have thought that, as a barrister—

WITNESS. I am not a barrister—not called yet—

SCREW. Oh, indeed, not a barrister—then you must allow me to say, Mr. Brogg, that in that position, even had this been a case of law-study and its hindrances, it would have been premature, if not presumptuous, in you to have expressed your opinion thus publicly. As it is—as it is—but let that pass. Have you, perchance, any other claim to be heard in a case of this sort?

WITNESS. I have been more engaged, I believe, in the study of literature than either that of law, or the art of painting. As one engaged in literary pursuits—as, in short, an author—I can testify to the necessity of quiet for the prosecution of literary labour, and as art and letters are sisters, I suppose that, to a considerable extent at any rate, what applies to one, applies also to the other.

SCREW. Stop a bit, stop a bit, Mr. Brogg. I was not aware that we had an author here. This is an unexpected honour. May I venture to ask in what direction your studies have been directed—what have been your principal works?

WITNESS. I have written a great many things. It would almost puzzle me where to begin.

SCREW. But are these all published? It is curious, but at this moment I do not remember the name—would you kindly refresh my memory by mentioning some one or two of your published works?

WITNESS. Oh, they are not published.

SCREW. Not published! And do you mean to tell me, sir, that you come here—that you come into court—that you appear before this extraordinarily intelligent jury in the capacity of an author, and one who is to give an opinion *as* an author, and that you are unable to point to a single published work bearing your name? Upon my word, Mr. Brogg, this seems to me to be a case bordering almost upon contempt of court. The boldness—and I might use a harsher word—of my learned friend seems to be contagious, and to affect even the very witnesses who appear on his side. Upon my word, sir, you must allow me to say that your appearance here this day has been altogether a false proceeding. You have come forward to give evidence in a case without, as far as I can see, having the very slightest claim to be heard. We have this day learned a great deal of what you are not—we have heard that you are *not* an artist, *not* a barrister, *not* an author. But we have heard nothing of what you *are*; and I would strongly recommend you, the next time you have to make your appearance in a technical case of this sort, to be quite sure that you know in what capacity you are appearing, lest you do as much harm to the cause which you desire to serve, as you have done this day to that of the plaintiff in this cause.

At this point, Mr. Codger, the counsel for the plaintiff, interposed, submitting that the remarks of the defendant's counsel were irrelevant. This caused a great deal of talking and browbeating, and mutual appeals to the "better feeling of learned friends," in the course of which the ill-used but distinguished subject of this memoir was allowed to descend from his unenviable eminence and to go whither he listed. Mr. Brogg left the court at once, and made his way, no doubt, to Poets' Corner. As to the trial, it went on as trials of this sort do. There was a great deal of what is called "chaff," and a great deal of laughter. The dog was brought into court, in order that the jury might test the quality of its bark for themselves, but the animal declining to give vent to any sound whatever, its introduction appeared to be something of a failure, till a facetious barrister, getting a furtive hold of its tail, caused it to utter such a volley of excruciating howls as caused the court once more to be convulsed with laughter, and gave a "leg up" to the plaintiff's cause. Finally, and after a long day had been consumed in the investigation of a case which the judge pronounced both trivial and vexatious, a verdict was given for the defendant, who went out of court triumphant; the dog giving vent to such a volley of barks, that the foreman of the jury whispered to a friend that he thought they ought to go back and give the verdict the other way.

Mr. Grampus remarked quite quietly to those who stood about him that he had made up his mind, and should take the case into Chancery.

Mr. Grampus, however, did not eventually pursue this course. Perhaps he thought that

he had had enough of law, when the bills connected with his recent suit began to come in, not to speak of the costs and other trifles which fell to his share. Mr. Grampus was in no condition to deal with these little matters; the withdrawal of Mr. Green from the list of art-patrons having made a great deal of difference to him, and so it ended in the whole of these liabilities being paid off by that despised financier old Mr. Brogg; and I do believe that Grampus, in his secret heart, thought that the good man was only doing his duty, and that to be allowed to assist a genius like himself was quite a distinguished privilege for a City man.

But the most remarkable result of that Grampus trial—for I can attribute the phenomenon I am about to speak of directly to nothing else—was its effect upon the conduct of the illustrious person the incidents of whose earlier life I am now, as it were, touching upon. He seemed to be both moody and thoughtful, appeared little among us, and when he did, wore the air of one who is revolving some important matter in his head. We used to think that he had been so disturbed by the insolence of the disgusting cross-examiner Screw, as to be unable to recover himself. The painful light in which this wretched mountebank had managed to exhibit our noble and respected friend was preying, we thought, on that friend's mind. Of course we never spoke of these things—never alluded to the trial, or to anything connected with it, though we could none of us help feeling that it was in a great degree accountable for the change which we observed. How I got to detest that trial, and everything connected with it; the obstinate neighbour, who, by-the-by, wore an expression which was simply infernal when he heard the nature of the verdict; the dog, the judge, the jury, the counsel on both sides; the one was a brute, and the other an incapable; nay, I think I almost hated Grampus himself. "After all," I thought, "a man has no right to let himself get into that state of sensitiveness; it's morbid, to say the least of it."

The alteration in our revered friend appeared in many ways, but in none more remarkably than in his withdrawal of himself, to a great extent, from the society which still held its gatherings at Poets' Corner. Rarely did we see him there. He lived now almost entirely at his chambers in the Temple; and perhaps this was one reason why we saw so much less of him, but it was not all. He seemed to have conceived—incredible as it seems—a distaste for the society of our little knot of geniuses; and when he did come to the house, it was simply to see his father and mother, and not to receive the adulation which was ready for him if he had happened to want it.

"Want it?" He wouldn't have it. On one occasion, when he did favour us with a visit, and Mr. Smear made bold to ask him to read us one of his favourite poems, he became quite excited: "My dear Christopher," he said, "you've heard that poem, and indeed every one of the lot, quite

as often as is good for you. I've been looking through the whole set of them lately, and I'm not at all sure but that the entire collection ought to find its way into the fire; for the courtesy with which you have, all of you, borne the infliction of those precious rhymes over and over again, I am really very much obliged to you, but your patience shall be rewarded, and you shan't be troubled with them again, if I can help it." Here was a state of things. Poor Smear looked as if the crisis of an earthquake were at hand, and Mr. Brogg whispered to me that of a surety that "horrid trial had turned his brain." And so it had in one way, at any rate. He was a changed man.

And now, more wonderful than all, our friend, so far from eschewing society, as from his so rarely showing himself among us might have been expected, began, on the contrary, to take every opportunity of going into what I should have been disposed to call the outer world—the world beyond our limits. He joined the crowd—the giddy, frivolous crowd. He got into a club, and who—who—does the reader think proposed him? Heaven and earth! Surprise of surprises! It was no other than his cousin, between whom and himself there had heretofore been nothing but misunderstanding and uncongeniality. Yes, it was H. K. who proposed him, and brought him through; and when I heard of this, I confess that my spirit did fail me, for I felt that all was indeed altered now, and that C. J. was but too certainly gone from among us.

"What," I said, "fraternise with H. K.? Join a club of which he is a member; nay, even in some sort through his instrumentality? Have you not already our own debating club—the 'Mutual'? Or, if you need one of another kind, Grampus would have got you into the 'Hermits.'"

"We have been playing at 'Hermits' too long already," my friend replied. "It won't do. Hermits don't see the world, and I must see it, mix in it, try to get a place in it. Time enough, to be a Hermit when I fail. And as to H. K. whom we have been in the habit of despising as a worldling, it really seems to me that he has, all this time, while we have been patting each other on the back—that he has, I say, been pursuing a very sensible course, and on the whole has the laugh on his side."

I saw now that the time had come for me to say what little I had to say about recent events, and I spoke:

"My dear friend," I said, "you are much changed of late. So much changed, indeed, and so quickly, that I can hardly recognise you or myself as the same people. I know that that horrid trial has been the immediate cause of all this, but I think even before that you were getting unsettled in your opinions. You come less to our Mutual Union than you used, and, when you do come, you are far from taking the place there which I always expected and intended that you should take. You allow yourself to be contra-

dicted by any ordinary member. That Carpew will never let you say anything without requiring a reason for it if you allow him so much liberty. And then the agreeable circle at Poets' Corner, how little you frequent it now, going forth instead among strangers who don't know what you are as we do. Why should you leave a society where you were understood, where you were recognised by every member of it as a great man, and pass your time among unsympathising people, who will never understand or appreciate you as you deserve?"

"Ah, Bradshaw," he said, "I used to think that I was a great man once."

"And so you are," I answered, eagerly, for I didn't like the despondent tone at all. "What do you mean by saying 'you used to think?'"

"I mean that I've found out my mistake."

"Mistake," I repeated. "What are you talking about? Look at the opinion of the world—of the people you're surrounded by. Do they think you a great man, or do they not?"

"Ah," said my friend, sadly, "that is just it. The opinion of my friends. A small circle, a narrow clique. You began just now to speak of the world. I have forgotten the world, or rather have supposed that the world consisted of half a dozen of my personal friends."

"Yes, but what friends? The very pick of society," I answered. "Besides, your whole life has been that of a great man——"

"Without the greatness," interrupted my friend, in a sad tone. "Upon my life and soul," he added, "I almost believe that I have been an impostor. I have gone on as if I really had a claim on the belief of all the world, and have never paused to inquire in what such a claim consisted. It has been a delusion, a horrid and abominable self-delusion, and you, my good friend, have helped to foster it."

"No," I cried, stoutly. "It was no delusion. This—this is the delusion which has got possession of you now. Shake it off, sir, shake it off without delay, and be yourself again. Come among us again your own self. Brush up your hair again into its accustomed form; I'm shocked to see it thus flat and dishevelled. Resume your old manner. I declare it's quite altered. Put these vile fancies away, for Heaven's sake, or I shall go mad. As you are now, I should hardly recognise you. You leave me without rudder or compass in the world. Get back with all speed to be the great C. J. Brogg of the good old times, and let us be happy in the good old way."

"I am afraid, my dear Bradshaw," replied this god of my idolatry, after a short pause, "that your words are wasted. I have spent some time just lately in a searching investigation into my way of life, and everything, whether of a bodily or mental nature, connected with it, and the result of that examination, while it has been humiliating, has been altogether final. Why, consider yourself for a moment, what claim have I to greatness?"

"The claim of being great," I replied, doggedly. "And how has that been shown?" was the next question.

"In a thousand ways," I answered. "Look at your power of retort. Look at your conversational ability. Look at your—at the very look of you, then, when your hair was different, who could mistake you for a moment for anything but a——"

"Ah, my dear friend," interposed C. J., mournfully, "you can't make anything of it. If I ever made a good retort, which I begin to doubt, it was pondered over, and led up to, very carefully. In those, and in my conversation generally, I was helped by my poor brother James, who was never tired of trying to draw me out, and lead the way to something in connexion with which he thought that I might find opportunity for display. And I have encouraged him to do so, and even directed him which way to lead the conversation, in order that I might get in my effects."

I was at my wits' end. "This never can be, never must be, never shall be," I cried, in the bitterness of my soul. "If you are going to take ideas of this sort into your head, you will leave me with nobody to believe in, nothing to care about in the world. We were such a happy little circle——"

"Little enough," murmured Brogg, abstractedly.

"So much the better," I went on; "we understood each other. The world is such a vast place, and society is such a vast institution, that people who would fain sound each other's depths, and really know themselves and their fellows, must necessarily go aside out of the crowd, and live to some extent apart. And very happy we were, and now you're going to spoil it all, and we shall all drop asunder and be lost. Our strength is in union, and, the union gone, where shall we be? For my part, I tell you fairly that I shall lapse back into being a mere worldling. I shall go to plays for other purposes than to furnish a criticism to the 'Mutual.' I shall read the newspapers. I shall walk in the Park—go to the dogs altogether, most likely."

"Better go to the dogs along with the rest of your fellow-creatures, than go in the same direction, as we were doing, with a sense that we were better than everybody else, believing so mainly because we never ventured to undergo the test of comparison, and shrunk from a competition in which doubtless we should have broken down."

"You break down! Ha, ha!" I said, savagely.

"As likely as not. The great world outside is hard to excel in. A man can sing his song with but a weak piping-note in a boudoir and win a wealth of applause, who, trying his abilities in the concert-hall, would be laughed to scorn, just as the artist paints a picture as our friend Smear does, which, though admired in his own studio, goes for nothing when exhibited along with others in Trafalgar-square. Why, even the really great men who can stand, and have stood,

the test of comparison, will not shut themselves up in a small set with impunity, for if they do, they will surely come to forget what numbers of clever men there are in the world, who can do as well as they, though in a different line. "Great!" he added, enthusiastically, "how few attain to being so! A man who would be called great should give to the world what makes it better or happier; should give some impetus to the advance of civilisation; should sacrifice a lifetime, or maybe a life, to the development of a truth. There has been little enough of this sort of thing in our Mutual Union, Bradshaw."

He paused, and I did not speak. I was bewildered, and could not follow my friend. I was considerably dashed, and yet I could not see—or at least own—that he was right. Long adhesion to a cause, ancient prejudice, I know not what, may have kept me blind. I had sat so long at that wonderful table with the green baize upon it, with the model inkstands, and the cleanly blotting-paper, and the prodigious quills, which were never used except by the profile drawer and our poor friend Smear, who took such prolific notes. How long had I been used to that way of spending the evening; how accustomed was my hand to the little ivory hammer with which it was my wont to rap the members into silence when any gentleman was going to enlighten us with a few remarks! What heart should I have now for ivory hammers, or anything else belonging to our revered institution?

This was all the work of that accursed trial. If that stupid Grampus would have allowed his neighbour's dog to bark in peace, things might still have gone on in the old pleasant way. And yet I don't know. Our dear friend had seemed a good deal unsettled lately—self-mistrustful, diffident, hesitating. That speech to the Reverend Smear, recorded at the close of the last chapter but one, was very significant of an unsettled frame of mind: "I am beginning to doubt whether I am the remarkable person you would in your kindness make me out to be." There was a misgiving already existent, and only needing that infernal trial to give it confirmation. That speech of the counsel for the other side, "Sir, we have heard a great deal of what you are *not*, but nothing of what you are," seems to have sunk into C. J.'s very heart of hearts, and made him an altered man. I felt despondent in the last degree.

"Don't be cast down, William," said my well-loved friend, speaking once again with heart in his voice. "This change makes no difference between us, or only the difference that we may not meet quite so often as before. I *must* do as I am doing. It was all very well the other way of life, but it wasn't right. It was very pleasant, I grant you; very soothing, never to hear anything but what was agreeable, but it wasn't wholesome. What a bore I was becoming with all that reading aloud, and holding forth; I remember now how they used to yawn. I must

have had more opportunities of studying the interior of the human mouth than any man not a dentist in England. No, no! It was a mistake for *me*, at any rate. An atmosphere so carefully guarded from chills and draughts as that, was not good for one in such good health as I am. The change, I grant you, is a great one. The men of the clubs, and others who take the principal parts in the Drama of London Life, are not venerative, nor are they easily impressed. You must mind what you are about with them. If you make a mistake, they will promptly be down upon you. The air is rough, cold, bracing; but it is wholesome and strengthening. Let me live in it then, old friend, at any rate as long as my constitution stands it. If I fall into a consumption, or a bronchitis, I will come back to the hothouse to be nursed, but till then I will just go on as well as I can, resolving, at any rate, rather to be a minnow among the Tritons, than a Triton among the minnows."

He ceased, and I saw that all was over, and that it was useless, perhaps wrong, for me to say any more. Maybe he had chosen rightly, for he knew better than I did.

At all events, here my function ceases. What may be the future career of him whose early life I have thus imperfectly sketched, remains to be seen, but I shrewdly suspect that the public will hear of it without need of any chronicling of mine. My task is over. As my friend issues out of the limits of that home circle in which he was so well understood and so highly appreciated, he passes beyond my reach, and I can only look on with a sigh, and feel as if he had embarked upon a long and arduous voyage, and had left me loitering behind.

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